

Prime minister's exit will bring more uncertainty to the people of Ireland

Haughey's fall offers little hope

By EDWARD GORMAN, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

WHILE all eyes in Dublin focused on the race to succeed Charles Haughey as Irish prime minister yesterday, politicians in Northern Ireland were evaluating the likely impact of his resignation next week on the search for a settlement in Belfast.

On the face of it, Mr Haughey's departure from the centre stage of Irish politics, should enhance considerably the chances for reconciliation between Unionists and nationalists.

Mr Haughey was for years dominated by hardline Unionist opinion, which smeared him as an "arch-

republican" or, as one prominent Unionist put it on Thursday, "a piece of Republican baggage which got in the way of talks."

So long as Mr Haughey remained in office Ian Paisley and his followers in the DUP could always prey on their constituents' insecurities by dredging up the old arms trial allegations and by trying to demonstrate that Mr Haughey was untrustworthy.

Although in his later years Mr Haughey came to accept fully the concept of devolution in Belfast and enthusiastically pushed ahead with the initiative of Peter Brooke, the Northern Ireland secretary, it was always difficult to imagine him sitting at the negotiating table with Mr Paisley.

For these reasons either of the two most likely successors to Mr Haughey — Albert Reynolds, the former Finance Minister and Bertie Ahern, the current Finance Minister — should have a better chance of winning the confidence of Unionists.

Both now enjoy the advantage, already evident in John Major's approach to Ireland and the perception of him by Irish politicians, of having no real track record on the prob-



Losing a job, gaining a daughter. Charles Haughey kisses Laura Daly, who married his son Ciaran, left, in Dublin yesterday

lem. Mr Reynolds and Mr Ahern cannot be quickly written off by sections of Unionist opinion because of their past actions or words.

Despite all this, however, in both nationalist and unionist circles yesterday there was a feeling that Mr Haughey's departure might at best only marginally improve prospects for a breakthrough.

One worry among unionists, also evident in the Northern Ireland Office, is that a

successor may not be able to deliver his party on the crucial question of amending the republic's constitutional claim to Northern Ireland.

Mr Haughey with his well-established "green" credentials in Fianna Fail, was always going to be capable of selling a referendum on articles 2 and 3 and winning it, as part of a major new settlement.

His successor may be unable to hold the country and

the party together on so divisive an issue.

In the SDLP there are signs of concern that the next leader of Fianna Fail will succumb to what some in the party see as a worrying tendency in some sections of Irish opinion, particularly since the election of Mary Robinson as president, to overcompensate for unionist fears.

The SDLP knew they could always rely on Mr Haughey.

He knew the realities of life for the minority community in Northern Ireland they believed, and they trusted him not to make unilateral or unrealistic gestures in a short cut to a settlement which could not last.

Although there seems a firm commitment from the constitutional party leaders and the two governments to further talks after the general election in Britain, the Irish political scene after Mr

Haughey is more uncertain than it has been for some years.

A change of government is possible in London which could significantly alter the balance of influence between unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland. A new secretary of state at Stormont looks likely whether the Conservatives stay in power or not, and a general election in the Irish Republic might not be far off.



Ahern: no track record on devolution

Architects welcome institute

By DAVID YOUNG

BRITAIN'S leading architectural body has welcomed the Institute of Architecture founded on Thursday by the Prince of Wales.

Richard MacCormac, president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, just one mile from the proposed academy in Regent's Park, due to open in October, said: "His initiative will be a further contribution to the present range and diversity of architectural education."

The welcome, magnanimous coming as it does from the heartland of a profession much criticised by the prince, was echoed in some surprising quarters. A spokesman for Lord Palumbo, the Arts Council chairman whose design for the City of London site currently occupied by the old Mappin and Webb building was dismissed as resembling a "Thames wireless", said: "The more that architecture is discussed and the more recognition it gets from the public, the better."

Sir Denis Lasdun, whose design for the National Theatre was said by the prince to be "a clever way of building a nuclear power station", said he and other architects had been unmoved by comments from royal quarters about their work. "We've all had it and he's not the first... Prince Albert was very interested as well."

Leading article, page 13

Major makes inheritance tax main campaign issue

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major has told Conservative party advisers that he intends to establish plans to phase out inheritance tax as a centrepiece of the general election campaign.

The prime minister is set on promoting a Tory philosophy of encouraging families to create and pass on wealth through the generations, in marked contrast to plans by Labour and the Liberal Democrats for more taxation on inherited wealth.

Tax of 40 per cent starts to bite on estates of more than £140,000, but the spread of home and share ownership has led to many more families facing tax bills on the death of elderly relatives, particularly in the South.

A senior Tory party source confirmed yesterday that Mr Major regarded the issue as a big vote-winner, marking out the sharp ideological difference between the Conservatives and other parties.

Treasury officials have worked out the economics of raising the threshold, phasing out or abolishing the tax, which brings in about £1.25 billion a year.

Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, appeared initially to favour a substantial raising of the £140,000 threshold, which could be included in his March 10 Budget. Since the richest families tend to protect beneficiaries through tax avoidance schemes, Mr Major is now understood to prefer the more drastic and politically attractive measure

of signalling abolition of the tax by a Tory government.

Mr Major is expected to cite the government's abolition of capital transfer tax as the first step towards freeing the transfer of wealth within families. That abolition, left an anomaly, by allowing someone to pass wealth to a relative "tax-free" while alive, although it could incur inheritance tax upon death.

Last October, in his first Tory conference speech as prime minister, and again in his New Year message, Mr Major said that a personal priority was to allow families to pass on homes, businesses and savings without penalty.

At the conference, Mr Major spoke of the revolution since 1979 of four million

more families owning their homes and eight million more owning shares, and said this should go further in the 1990s. "I want to see wealth cascading down the generations," he said. "We do not see each generation starting out anew, with the past cut off and the future ignored."

Labour argues for "effective taxation of wealth", including lifetime gifts. In *Meet the Challenge*, *Make the Change*, Labour proposes a reciprocal tax, to encourage dispersal of wealth and forestall tax avoidance schemes. It proposes exemption for small estates and gifts between spouses.

The Liberal Democrats advocate taxing gifts and inheritances as broad income.

Kinnock replies to Tory tax claims

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR is the "party of the bottom 91 per cent", Neil Kinnock declared yesterday as he sought to portray his planned tax increases as no threat to potential middle class supporters.

The Labour leader set out to repair the damage done to his party by the Tory new year offensive. He highlighted independent findings that fewer than one family in ten will be worse off under plans for higher pensions and child benefit funded by income tax and national insurance rises.

Pointing to a report from the Institute of Fiscal Studies, he said that nearly five out of ten families would be better off, four out of ten would not lose and only 8.7 per cent on the highest incomes would be out of pocket.

Tory election strategists will be pleased that the Labour leader has become bogged down on their territory. How-

ever, Mr Kinnock knows that with opinion polls showing that more than 50 per cent of people believe Labour would raise their taxes, he has to take the fight to his opponents.

Mr Kinnock countered Tory claims that Labour would take an extra £1,000 a year from the average taxpayer by denouncing their "chorus of lies" and promising not to raise the 25p in the pound basic income tax rate.

Michael Howard, the employment secretary, sought to stem the belated fightback, however, by saying that a Labour government would increase taxes, let inflation rip, put up interest rates and wreck industrial relations.

Mr Kinnock, speaking in Manchester, repeated claims that the Conservatives would have to raise VAT to deliver their goal of a basic rate of 20p in the pound plus spending increases. He said Labour's priority would be higher spending on public services and not tax cuts. The public knew that if the Chancellor had money to play with it should be used to improve health and education.

Ashdown sets out his terms

By NICHOLAS WOOD

PADDY Ashdown yesterday set out in the clearest terms to date his conditions for forming a coalition with either of the two main parties in a hung Parliament.

The Liberal Democrat leader said he would require the introduction of proportional representation, an agreed programme covering four years in power and ministerial posts for himself and members of his party.

However, he left open the key question of what he would do if John Major or Neil Kinnock rejected his demands and defied him to vote down a Queen's Speech brought in by a minority government.

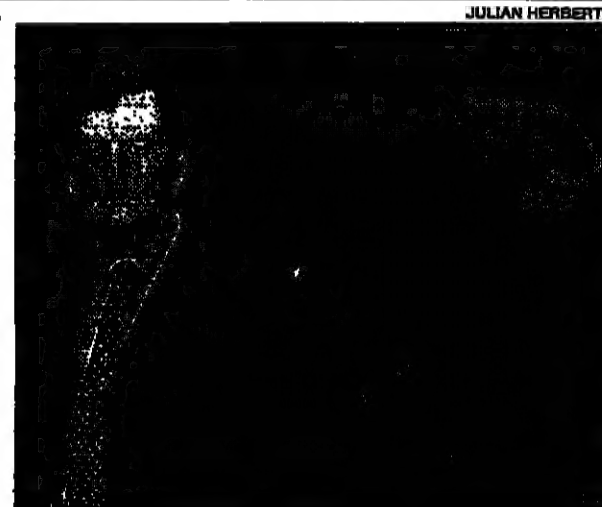
Insiders at Westminster believe that this is the most likely outcome if neither the Tories or Labour achieve an overall majority, a strong possibility on the basis of the most recent opinion polls.

Last night, sources close to Mr Ashdown made clear that their leader's remarks in a television interview with Sir Robin Day on Channel 4's *The Parliament Programme* left open the option of offering tacit support to a minority government by not opposing its initial programme.

A statement issued by Mr Ashdown's office a week ago summed up the official position: "Our priority is stable and effective government. We shall have to make a judgment according to the political circumstances of the time as to what action will best help to reach a stable government. We shall judge any Queen's Speech according to its contents and whether the measures contained are in the national interest."

Mr Ashdown knows that if he were to precipitate an immediate second general election because he had failed to get PR, his rivals would blame him for the resulting upheaval and uncertainty and the electorate might exact revenge.

Mr Ashdown said: "We will be interested in providing stability."



David Jones, zoo director since 1984, yesterday

Director of London zoo loses his job

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

DAVID Jones, the embattled director of London Zoo, is to be relieved of his post by the council of the Zoological Society of London. It was announced yesterday.

His departure, after a campaign against him by a group of the society's fellows, comes at the end of a five-year dispute between proponents of a "theme-park" future for the zoo and those insisting it remain primarily a centre for conservation activities such as captive breeding.

Mr Jones, aged 47, overall director of Regent's Park and its sister zoo at Whipsnade since 1984, has been the most visible figure in the argument, caused by the zoo's inability to pay its way in the face of falling gate receipts.

A council composed largely of new members appointed in the summer, and pressed by some of the active zoologists among the fellowship, has now decided that the proper way forward is with animals rather than with commerce, and yesterday it signalled that the once-favoured theme-park idea was dead by scrapping the management core group set up to develop it.

Peter Holwell, the principal of London University, who is the council's treasurer, said in a statement: "The council has established a clear way forward for the development of its zoos on an animal-centred basis." Mr Jones's £50,000

post is to be scrapped from April 30 and a new director appointed solely for London Zoo. Mr Jones is discussing a part-time position as co-ordinator of the society's international conservation activities.

The timing of his removal caused considerable concern among zoo staff yesterday, not least because Mr Jones has just presided over a 30 per cent cut in zoo staff and the transfer of over a thousand animals. After a £2 million operating deficit the zoo is likely to break even in the coming financial year.

One senior zoo figure said: "The council have made a serious mistake. They hope to appoint a new director, but who is going to come into this situation, completely fresh to it, having no knowledge of the background and not even whether the zoo is going to survive? We don't see a definite way forward."

Poll tax debts add £21 to each bill

Government hopes that poll tax bills will average £257 a head from April appeared increasingly forlorn yesterday after councils said they would have to levy at least £21 a head more to make up for non-payment (Douglas Broom writes).

At the same time, an analysis of county council budgets showed that poll tax bills outside London and the metropolitan areas would be further inflated by plans for an increase in spending of an average of 8 per cent. Taken together, the moves could add up to £40 a head to bills in some parts of the shire counties, driving the poll tax close to the £300 level predicted by Labour.

A survey of 144 councils by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy found that they were planning to add an average of £21.37 a head to bills from April to cover shortfalls caused by non-payment.

Metropolitan districts planned the biggest surcharges, an average of £32 a head. The London borough of Brent, now under Tory control after more than a decade of Labour rule, said it was considering adding £150 a head for non-payment.

By contrast, shire districts were planning surcharges averaging £14.50 while in Wales, where payment levels are high, the average was around £3 a head.

Bill backed

A bill to allow district nurses and health visitors to prescribe simple medicines, ointments and dressings was given an unopposed second reading in the Commons yesterday. It has strong backing from the government and the Opposition, and is supported by nurses, doctors and patients' organisations. Special training will be provided and a list of allowed medicines drawn up.

Target nears

Book Aid winds up its appeal this weekend to send a million books to Russia and expects to achieve its target. In addition to the 150,000 volumes already sent to Russia, at least 500,000 books have been collected and 150,000 promised in the past two weeks. The charity's warehouse in King's Cross, London (Tel: 071 713-7258), will continue to receive books after the appeal ends tomorrow.

Divorcee loses

A schoolmistress lost an appeal yesterday against a court order to pay her former husband £54,261 from the matrimonial assets. Gillian Lovejoy, of Richmond, southwest London, had said in a statement supporting her claim for after-divorce financial relief in 1987, that she had no plans to re-marry or live with another man. She has since remarried and the court said that it believed the relationship had existed in 1987.

Sunday shops

Enthusiasm for Sunday shopping has eased since the pre-Christmas period, when 2.4 million households took advantage, compared with 900,000 last Sunday, says a Nielsen survey of 7,100 homes, published yesterday.

CORRECTION

Saturday's radio details were given in error in yesterday's paper. We apologise to readers.

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College restoration praised

By JOHN O'LEARY, HIGHER EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A RESTORATION project at a Cambridge college that is still not complete after 23 years yesterday won a European conservation award.

Trinity College, Cambridge, is one of the 16 British winners that have taken more than a third of this year's awards by Europa Nostra, a federation of associations concerned with cultural and natural heritage in 25 countries.

Trinity's award for a programme which started in 1968 with the restoration of the college's Wren library, is

one of 14 diplomas going to Britain. The work has been designed by the London architects Donald W Insall and Associates.

Among the winners of medals of honour, the top category of award, were the Foreign Office and Inveraray Jail, in Scotland. The prison and county court house have been converted into a visitors' centre concentrating on Scottish legal and penal history, while the Victorian headquarters of the Foreign Office have been under restoration for a decade.

The other British diploma winners were the National Trust properties, Biddulph Grange Garden, in Staffordshire, and the Apprentice House at Quarry Bank Mill, near Wilmslow, Cheshire; Cromarty courthouse, Highland; the Ca'd'oro building, Scotland Street School, Speirs Wharf, the Italian Centre and the cathedral's civic square, in Glasgow; Halifax millings, Leeds Corn Exchange, Hertfordshire; Stratford memorial theatre, and a printing works in Innerleithen, Borders.

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Kidnap police may have let abductor slip through net

By CRAIG SETON AND PETER DAVENPORT

SPECULATION grew yesterday that the police operation to catch the kidnapper of a woman estate agent may have gone wrong at a critical moment enabling him to escape with a £175,000 ransom.

West Midlands police disclosed no further details yesterday of the plan involving 1,000 officers that they massed on Wednesday to free Stephanie Slater, aged 25, and apprehend her abductor. The ransom was picked up from a moorland location at Oxspring, near Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

However, Paul Burkinshaw, aged 38, who lives in Oxspring, told how he was detained by police officers on Wednesday night around the time that it is understood a courier left the ransom close to a disused railway bridge.

Mr Burkinshaw's account suggests that officers were very close to the ransom drop point, waiting for the kidnapper, and disclosed their presence when they stopped and questioned him. Mr Burkinshaw said he lived

about a quarter of a mile from the bridge. When he returned home in his car between 8pm and 8.30pm he noticed three men in another vehicle. Once inside his house, his dog had started barking and he went outside to investigate.

"It was dark and foggy," he said. "I heard a noise, but I could not see anyone. I heard some whispering. It must have been undercover officers in the field near the house. I asked them who they were and they said something like 'We are looking for the pub' and I heard them going off down the field. I think there were two."

Mr Burkinshaw said that at about 9.15pm he left the house to go and pick up his wife and noticed for the first time a series of small signs bearing the word Shipways—the name of the Birmingham estate agents where Miss Slater worked. It is believed these had been placed by the kidnapper to show the courier the route to follow and were likely to have been put there after Mr Burkinshaw had arrived home as he had not seen them earlier. He said

that when he was about to leave in his car, two other vehicles pulled him over. The occupants asked him who he was and where he was going. "They told me there was a major incident in the area, but they could not tell me anything about it." He said he was not allowed to return to his home and was taken to Barnsley police station, where he was kept for an hour before returning home. By that time, there was more obvious police activity in the area.

West Midlands police said after the release of Miss Slater that they had not moved to try to arrest the kidnapper because it could have endangered her life. Their fears for her safety and the escape of the kidnapper assume greater significance if it is confirmed that he is the same man who abducted and strangled Julie Dart, aged 18, in West Yorkshire last July.

The Yorkshire connection in the Slater abduction led West Midlands police to keep in constant touch during the eight days she was missing. Detectives are now understood to have concluded with the help of handwriting experts that there are distinct similarities in phrasing in letters from the abductor in both cases.

The man who abducted Miss Slater in Leeds and dumped her body near Grantham, Lincolnshire, had demanded £140,000 ransom and wrote letters to police talking about playing a game with officers. There were several links with the Midlands, including a 50-year-old laundry mark on a sheet in which the girl's body was wrapped, which was traced to a defunct laundry in Coventry.

The man who took Miss Slater gave a false address in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, where the county force has its headquarters, and asked for the ransom money to be taken to a location only five miles from the spot in South Yorkshire where Miss Slater's kidnapper left a hoax bomb in August last year.

South Yorkshire police said yesterday that they were surprised not to have been told of the operation by West Midlands in their area until 4am on Thursday.

A spokeswoman said that although, procedurally, the force did not have to be informed, some officers thought it might have been wiser to have involved police-men with local knowledge.

Julie Dart link, page 1

Jail swap for IRA men considered

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

PROPOSALS to transfer republican prisoners convicted of terrorist offences in Britain to jails in Northern Ireland are being considered by government officials.

Any decision to move convicted terrorists back to the milder remission regime of Northern Ireland and to the much better conditions at the Maze and Maghaberry jails would be fraught with political and legal difficulties.

A total of about 60 prisoners, serving sentences for terrorist and non-terrorist crimes, are understood to want to transfer to the province so they can be closer to their families. The government is under renewed pressure to allow the transfers after recommendations in the Woolf report that prisoners should serve their sentences in jails near their homes.

Among those who have been refused a transfer are Patrick Magee, serving eight life sentences for the Brighton bomb attack, Martina Anderson, jailed for conspiring to cause explosions in 1985, and Robert Walshe, William Armstrong and Paul Holmes. Walshe, Armstrong and Holmes were jailed at Winchester for causing explosions at Great Scotland Yard and the Central Criminal Court in March 1973. They were also convicted of conspiring with Dolours and Marian Price to cause explosions, but the Price sisters have been released from Ulster jails where they were transferred after hunger strikes in England.

Politicians from both communities in the province have pressed for prisoners to be

transferred because of the difficulties for relatives who want to visit. While ministers are sympathetic to the plight of the families, there is extreme sensitivity in Whitehall about sending convicted terrorists back to Northern Ireland where, under the 1961 Criminal Justice Act, they would benefit from the different sentencing policy and terms of remission.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, in England and Wales a convicted terrorist must serve a minimum of 20 years before the sentence is eligible for review. In Northern Ireland, a review board considers a sentence in the tenth year of imprisonment or the eighth if the person was under 18 when convicted. The average life sentence in the province is between 14 and 19 years.

Although the half-sentence remission that used to operate in the province was brought into line in 1988 with the one-third system in England and Wales, because the regulations are not retrospective most republican prisoners would be covered by the half-remission rules.

Actress fights rule that cost US role

By SIMON TAIT, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

JULIET STEVENSON, the award-winning British actress, has called for an end to restrictions on American and British actors working in one another's countries after her loss of a Broadway role.

She has accused Equity, the British actors' union, of failing to support Britons invited to work in the United States after American Actors' Equity successfully opposed her transferring there with a British production.

Miss Stevenson has disclosed that her praised performance in Ariel Dorfman's play *Death and the Maiden*, at the Royal Court theatre and to transfer to the West End this month, is not acceptable to the American union. An invitation to her by the director of the Broadway production, Mike Nichols, was opposed by American Equity because she is not recognised as a star. Glenn Close, star of the British-directed film *Dangerous Liaisons*, will take the role and star in a film of *Death and the Maiden*.

Yesterday, Miss Stevenson, a rising actress not short of film or stage offers, said: "American Equity kept moving the goal posts. First, they said they would only agree to it if an American actress took the role in London, then that the actress should have the same number of years of experience, and so on until it became plain that they were determined not to let me play the role. I am a supporter of Equity, but I think they should have stood firmer."

Terms between American Equity and the British union on allocation of roles are on a one-for-one basis. Only actors acknowledged as having star status are exempt from the rules, and despite Miss Stevenson's success on the

US cinema circuit with *Truth, Madly, Deeply*—for which she won an *Evening Standard* award—American Equity would not accept her.

Miss Stevenson said: "If you were to take a vote among British actors, I doubt if you would get a majority for any kind of barrier."

Peter Finch, British Equity's deputy general secretary, said that under the agreement, American actors were in credit, with Broadway exchanges for Michael Ball and Sarah Brightman still to be answered. "Although we



Stevenson: opposed by American union

would be happy to see the barriers disappear, as things stand we think they work fairly well," he said.

A bigger test is yet to come. Actors are exempt from normal visa requirements, but US immigration authorities want to limit appearances by British artists to 25,000 individuals a year, including sportsmen, pop singers and stage technicians. They also want to limit visits of companies, such as the Royal Opera, to the exact company used in Britain, with no change within three months of leaving here, an impossible undertaking to make.

Clapton blames nobody for son's death

By BILL PROST

ERIC Clapton, the rock guitarist, told an inquest yesterday that he held nobody responsible for the death of his son Conor, aged four, who fell from a window of his mother's 53rd floor apartment in New York while she was in another room.

Regarding a verdict of accidental death, Michael Burgess, the coroner at Guildford, Surrey, said that the boy could never have survived the 500-ft fall. The inquest was told that a cleaner who did not normally work in the block had left a window open in the apartment on March 20 last year.

The cleaner left the room and at that point Conor ran in. "He ran straight across the room, not seeing the open window and tipped," Mr Clapton told the inquest.

Lori Del Santo, the boy's mother, was in another part of the flat at the time of the accident, Mr Clapton said. The musician arrived at the block 20 minutes after Conor's fall, to find Ms Del Santo, his former wife, in a state of hysteria. The boy's mother had discovered the accident as she prepared to take him out for lunch. She called and called, but got no answer, Mr Clapton said.

"I was in a state of shock. I was shown the open window. All I remember was there was nothing there. You might feel a breeze, but other



Good years: Eric Clapton in February 1990 with the son he says saved his life

than that it did not look any different from how it would normally look. "It could not have been anyone's fault. I do not know if the man who opened the window was even aware there was a child in the apartment. He was not to blame," he said.

The inquest was told that Conor normally lived with his mother in Italy, but they

had moved to Manhattan about two weeks before his death. The day before the fall Mr Clapton had taken him to the circus. "He was a very frisky child, full of energy and full of life," he said.

In an interview with Sue Lawley for Granada television, to be screened later this month, the guitarist tells how Conor's birth had

helped to save his life by getting him off drink and hard drugs after years of addiction. Mr Clapton, aged 46, says: "I was lucky to have him. It was the reality of his existence that made me stop drinking and taking drugs. I spent four years with him as a sober human being, and still am. I am grateful for the time I had with him."

Acid bath wife 'was in bed with man'

By RICHARD DUCE

A BUILDER charged with the acid bath murder of his wife had found her in bed with another man only months before he killed her, the Central Criminal Court was told yesterday.

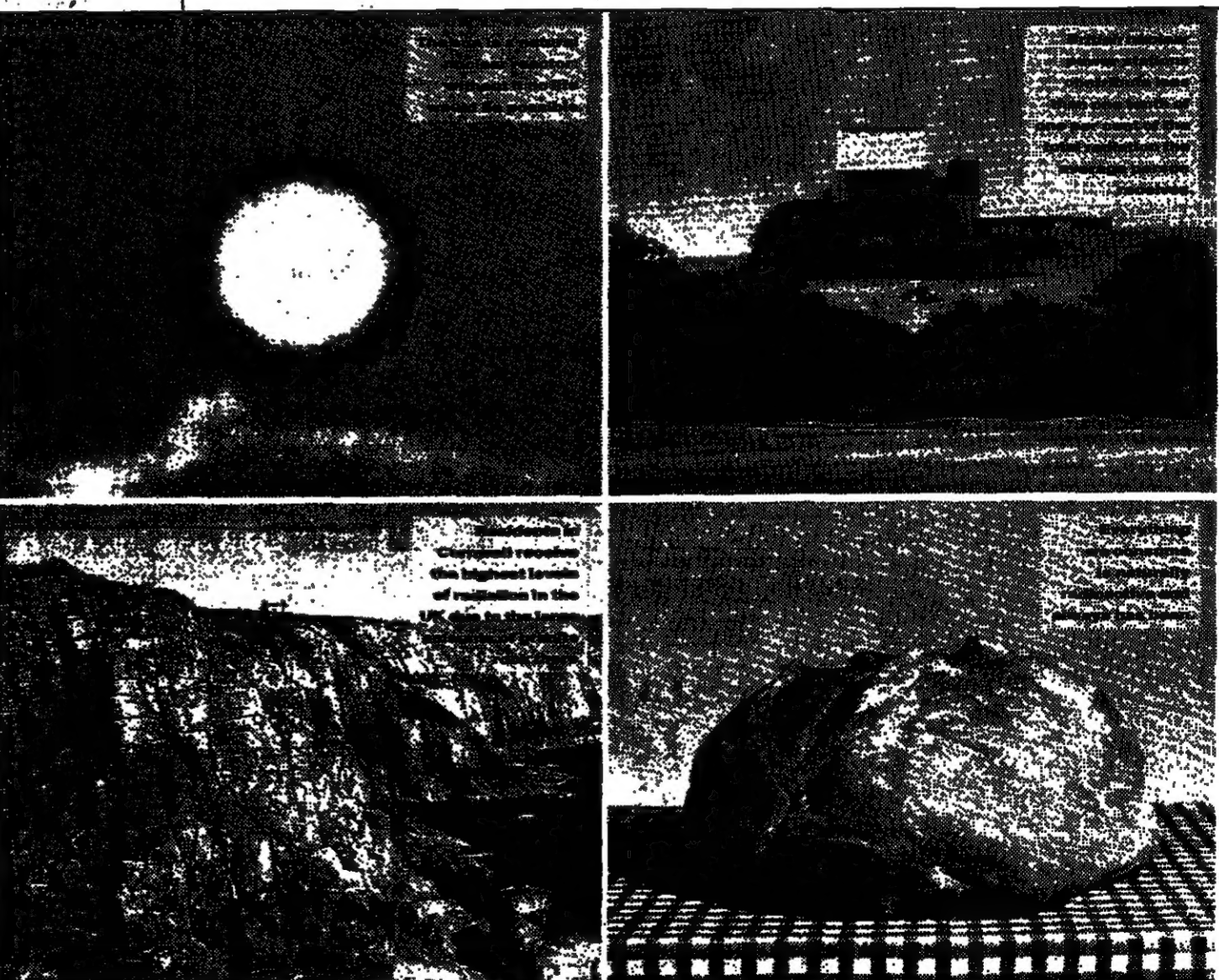
Cecil Jackson, who is conducting his own defence, cross-examined Lee Gibbs who admitted having a brief affair with Dassa Jackson but denied it lasted 13 years.

Mr Gibbs said that he was in bed with Mrs Jackson, who had left her husband, in autumn 1990 when Jackson entered the bedroom. "We were asleep. There was a sound of a door breaking downstairs and then the bedroom door was broken open. I got up and she hid behind me. I asked him to leave. He said that Dassa should not be hiding behind me but going to him. Then he left."

Mrs Jackson, aged 30, later went back to her husband but the prosecution alleges that he then planned her murder after taking out an insurance policy which would have paid him £57,000 on her death.

Jackson, aged 37, is said to have lured his wife to a lock-up garage near their home in Forest Gate, east London, where he tried to throttle her and then placed her in a bath filled with hydrochloric acid. Mrs Jackson is in hospital.

Jackson has admitted manslaughter but denies murdering his wife last February. The trial continues on Monday.



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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Kinnock and the Kremlin

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Johnnie Walker

Technology
prizes for
students
go begging

Tasks set
for pupils
at seven

Standards slip at
boyson's old school

FROM A MEXICAN FIESTA
TO A CARIBBEAN SIESTA
IN 5-STAR LUXURY.

CUNARD

Technology prizes for students go begging

BY JOHN O'LEARY
HIGHER EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A NEW technology competition for university and polytechnic students had to be cancelled for lack of entries yesterday, as the government announced its latest initiative to improve basic knowledge of the subject.

Six large industrial sponsors had put more than £50,000 into the competition, run by the National Economic Development Office and the Institution of Electrical Engineers. Students were asked to design an automated product or service for the home of the future, with the prospect of vacation employment and cash prizes.

Douglas Fraser, Industrial Director of the National Economic Development Office, said: "The few entries that have been received to date were very promising. It is a great pity that these students will not have the opportunity to compete against their peers for the chance of seeing their designs realised." Although

33 universities and polytechnics expressed interest, only six entered.

Barbara Stephens, Nedo's industrial adviser, said that academic snobbery was partly responsible. Some technology departments, more used to working with the defence industry, felt it a comedown to work on home automation.

The thousands of six and seven year-olds sitting the first national tests in technology this summer will be allowed no such inhibitions. They may be asked to design and make animal shelters, or control robots with computers.

The optional tests will assess basic practical and technical skills. Tim Eggar, education minister, said children should be asked to identify a problem, design a solution, make what they have designed and then evaluate the product, he said. "By the time today's seven-year-olds reach the age of 21 in 2006, these skills will be seen as crucial to both individual and national success."

Five-year-olds started to learn technology as part of the national curriculum in 1990. Each pupil will take four tests in design and technology, lasting about 30 minutes.

The National Union of Teachers said ministers must have been "living on the moon for the last five years" to approve such foolish and impractical tests. Doug McAvoy, the general secretary, said they would take days to complete and could not be taken by whole classes at once.

"This is typical of ministers who never talk to teachers and therefore come up with foolish ideas," he said. "They never think of particular problems. For example, we can't let a class of 30 six and seven-year-olds loose with scissors at once."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said that schools should consider whether they could cope with the tests. "If they lack the resources and if the tests are too far-fetched, primary schools should think very carefully before volunteering to participate."

Letters, page 13

Standards slip at Boyson's old school

BY LIN JENKINS

KENNETH Clarke, the education secretary, has ordered widespread changes at a school that was once one of the most popular comprehensives in London, after a report concluded that it was failing its pupils.

Highbury Grove secondary boys' school in Islington had a reputation for traditional standards, strictness and academic excellence born during the headship of Sir Rhodes Boyson MP, who left 18 years ago and went on to be a junior minister under Margaret Thatcher.

The report, by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, paints a portrait of an entirely different environment, where "the often poor behaviour, high levels of absence and unpunctuality contribute to under-achievement." Mr

Clarke has written to the local education authority asking it to oversee a plan of action to improve standards and to report on the progress by February 28.

The school has pupils from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds, speaking more than 30 languages. New pupils arriving at all ages often have a poor command of English. Peter Searl, the headmaster, said that governors and staff welcomed the report, and that the management team was being restructured.

Michael Fallon, schools minister, has demanded improvements in work standards at East Quinton school for children with emotional and behavioural problems in Salford, East Sussex, after an inspectors' report.



Goose-free zone: Carla Lane, creator of the television series *Bread*, surveys a Battersea Park where geese are now slightly rarer

Canada geese play hard to net

BY LOUISE HIDALGO

A FLOCK of Canada geese, the scourge of a London council, showed its preference for inner-city life yesterday as most birds shunned attempts by animal welfare campaigners to save them from being shot. All but 16 avoided capture during a rescue attempt at Battersea Park which had the blessing of Wandsworth council.

The rescue was planned by the television scriptwriter Carla Lane who wants to give the birds a new home. As her group arrived with crates to transport 80 geese, a battle of wits began. Brian Mist, an onlooker, said: "They scattered crushed millet and then rushed forward with long nets into the geese. Most just flew off in fright."

The operation was nevertheless hailed a success after the council said it would not shoot the 20 to 30 birds left before the open season ends today. The council would not rule out "selective thinning" later. It considers the park geese, which it says totalled 600 last year, a health risk.

The 16 trapped are to be kept at an undisclosed destination, with wings clipped, until they settle in.

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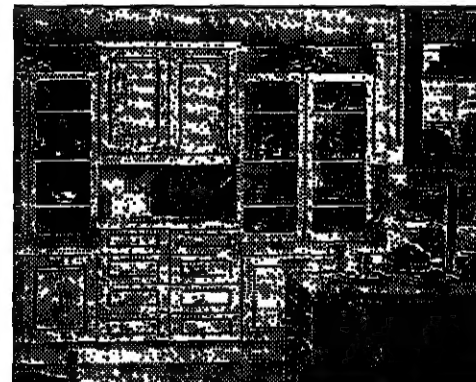


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CUNARD

Light-footed car worker waltzes up the learning curve

BY DAY, Pat O'Brien is one of dozens of workers shifting car parts in and out of one of Britain's biggest factories.

At night, however, the company pays Mr O'Brien to swap his overalls and steel toe-capped working boots for sleek evening suit and patent leather slippers to step into the spotlight as a ballroom dancer. Mr O'Brien is one of 7,000 car workers who have been allowed to realise their midlife fantasies, thanks to an education scheme run by the Rover Group.

The company encourages its workers to escape the monotony of the assembly line by taking up

educational or recreational courses, with classes often organised during and after shifts in spare rooms at its car plants in the Midlands.

Take-up has been enthusiastic, with grants awarded in the first year totalling £500,000. The company admits that the scheme is not just philanthropic, part of its aim to develop a workforce capable of learning new skills.

Rover is taking 3,000 workers out of offices and off assembly lines this year to study management and manufacturing techniques in companies throughout the world, including IBM, Sony

Employees are tripping the light fantastic and studying the care of sheep as a motor firm encourages its staff to acquire new skills. Kevin Eason reports on Rover's initiative

and J Sainsbury. The studying, complex and directly related to the job, can be difficult for workers whose formal education ended when they left school and who have forgotten the learning process.

Fred Coultas, managing director of the Rover Learning Business, said: "Learning to learn again can be very difficult. We do

not mind what our people do as long as they are extending themselves."

Tony Gasson, a maintenance engineer, has, at 59, chosen studies being taken by his own children. He enrolled with his daughters on a GCSE sociology course and after a pass is moving on to study psychology. An assembly worker, aged 53, took a course

in sign language because he wanted to communicate with a deaf colleague. He now wants to work helping the deaf.

Some courses have coped with more unusual requests, such as one from a production worker at Longbridge, the Birmingham plant making the Mini, Metro and Rover 200 models. He wanted to study sheep husbandry to help his family, which owns a farm.

Mr O'Brien, the ballroom dancer, is a storekeeper at the Land Rover subsidiary at Solihull. He has been one of the scheme's successes winning bronze and silver

medals for his ballroom skills and he is now going for gold.

Languages are the favourite subject, accounting for more than a third of the courses. French is the one most chosen, followed by German and Spanish.

Analysts seeking clues to the future of Rover, in which Honda of Japan has a 20 per cent stake, should, perhaps, ask the workers. While City whiffers wonder whether the British car maker might one day be entirely owned by the Japanese, the workers have made Japanese language and culture the fastest-growing area of study in Rover.

Archbishop tries to head off split over breakaway group

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, is trying to avert a split in the Church of England. Two charismatic bishops have set up a church body which could ultimately be seen as a rival Anglican Church in England.

Dr Carey said yesterday that the Federation of Independent Anglican Churches would be counterproductive if it turned into a body which provided "alternative episcopal oversight".

Dr Carey said he would support the federation only if it developed along different lines, and brought congregations back into the fold of the church. The church already faces a split over women

priests after priests from the other end of the church spectrum, the Anglo-Catholic wing, drew up proposals for alternative episcopal oversight for those opposed to the ordination of women.

The federation has been formed by the vicar and associate vicar of St Andrew's, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire as a result of problems with "church planting", the founding of daughter churches by congregations which outgrow their buildings.

Church planting is most common in the charismatic evangelical wing of the church. The new congregations worship in pubs, community centres, old churches

and even a doctor's surgery. Dr Carey is an enthusiastic supporter of church planting when it is within the law. Problems arise when a church is planted outside parish boundaries. Church law says no minister should exercise his authority "in any place where he has not the care of souls".

Dr Carey said that if the federation used its wisdom and experience to help those congregations into acceptance by their local vicars and bishops, "it will be doing the whole church a great service".

One congregation, in Cheltenham, was recently disaffiliated from the Gloucester diocese after it moved into a new parish. The Rev Nigel Scotland, its leader, said: "We value Anglican tradition, the Anglican order, the 39 articles and the liturgical framework. We certainly have not parted company with that. We have every intention of keeping to Anglican doctrine. But the parochial structure is a bit rigid."

The Rev David Pitches, former bishop of Cullinstown, said he and the Rev Brian Skinner, former bishop of Valparaiso, announced the federation in *The Church of England Newspaper* yesterday. The newspaper, on the church's evangelical wing, traditionally supports church planting, but gave a warning of a split. "It gives all the wrong signals to a national media which seems intent on telling us that the Church of England is likely to self-destruct at any moment."

The two bishops formed the federation to link churches which "are not able to be part of the parish structure of the Church of England". They are vicar and associate vicar of St Andrew's, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire which recently planted a church in the neighbouring parish of Watford.

Death crash driver branded callous

A MOTORIST who knocked a father-of-six off his bicycle, killing him, showed callous disregard by driving off without checking whether he was dead or alive, a coroner said yesterday.

The driver, Michael Thomas, 45, a truck driver, of Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, said he saw the cyclist's rear mudguard, but no cyclist. He stopped his car after the collision and moved the cycle to the side of the road. "It did not worry me at the time because I did not know there was a cyclist," he said. He went on to say the cycle "must have been ridden by someone".

Noreen Button said her husband had gone to work on the night of December 22 with his cycle lights on. She told the coroner she had six children, whose ages ranged from ten months to 12 years.

No decision has been taken on whether charges will be brought against Mr Thomas.

lous disregard for one's fellow humans — to knock someone down in a dark lane and drive off, not knowing whether he was dead, dying, injured or what."

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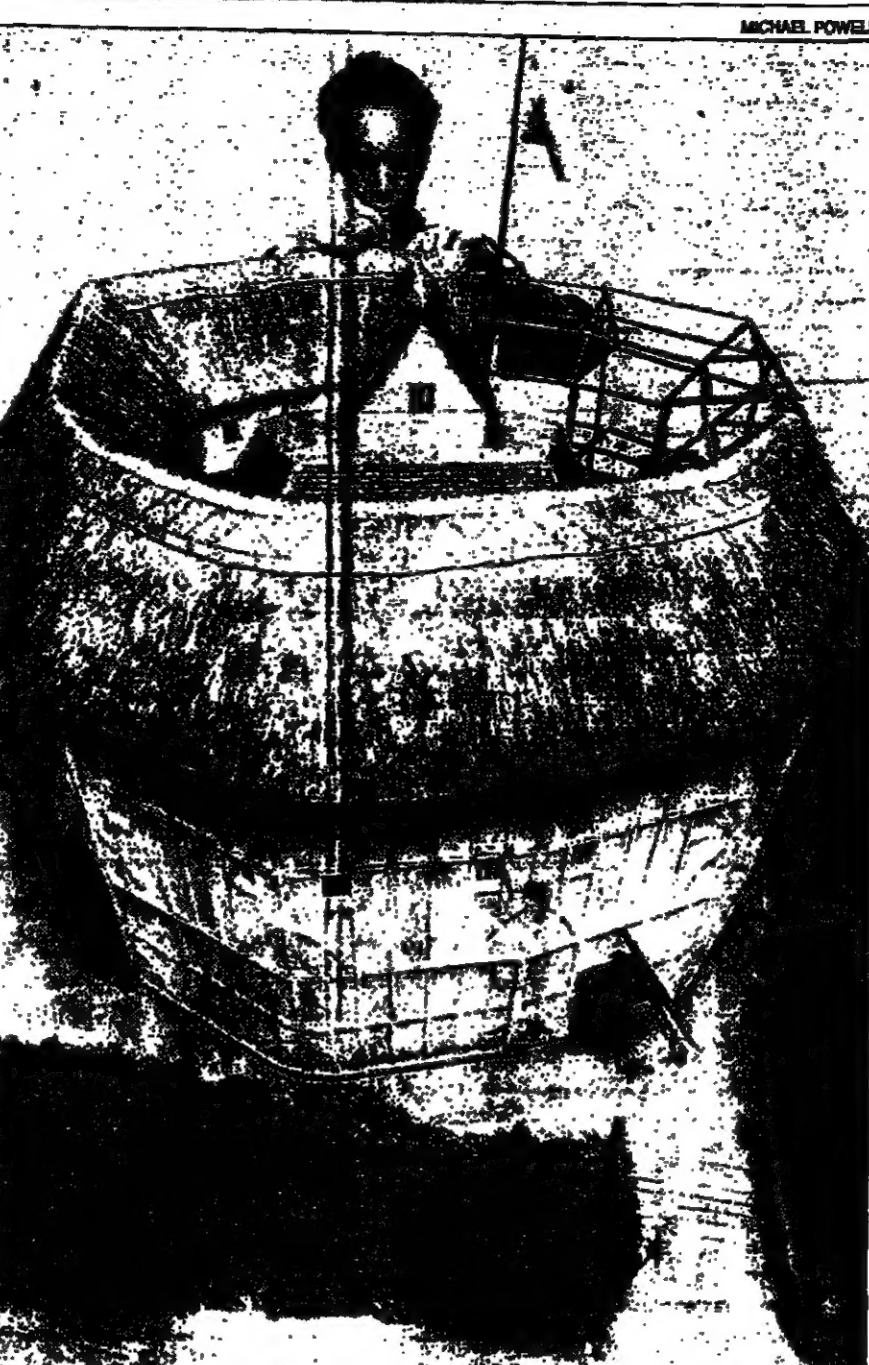
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Beach House, Ocean View, Nassau, Bahamas

Beach House, Ocean View, Nassau, Bahamas

Beach House, Ocean View, Nassau, Bahamas

Beach House, Ocean View, Nassau, Bahamas



Raising the roof: Paul Jomain working yesterday on a model Rose theatre, part of a Tudor and Stuart exhibition at the Museum of London from April 7

Vicarage ruling alarms planners

BY RONALD FAUX

FIVE law lords have ruled that the vicar of the ancient village of Carmel in Cumbria can have a new vicarage. Their decision that development in a conservation area may be allowed so long as the area's character and appearance are not harmed has implications that sent a frisson through conservation bodies.

Carmel is an attractive cluster of medieval buildings set next to an historic priory, all of which are protected by a conservation order. There has been no significant building done for a century.

When the church authorities began four years ago to

rationalise their rambling vicarages, a planning application to replace the Carmel vicarage with a new house built in its grounds was rejected by South Lakeland district council. The church authorities appealed and a planning enquiry found in their favour. The inspector decided that if the new vicarage were designed with great care, it need not harm the appearance of the village. That decision was accepted by the environment secretary and upheld by the court of appeal last March.

In the House of Lords, the council argued that the law banned any development in a

conservation area that did not enhance or "positively preserve" its character or appearance. However, Lord Bridge of Harwich said that although it was right to have strict control over development in conservation areas, planning law allowed development that left character and appearance unharmed.

South Lakeland council received financial support in fighting the case from more than 50 councils.

Ian Turnbull, architect for the Carlisle diocese and secretary of the parishage board, welcomed the Lords decision. The old Victorian vicarage,

set in extensive grounds and sheltered by trees, was, he said, a rambling and costly to heat and maintain. The new vicarage would be half the size, with stone walls, a slate roof and a design more in keeping with the old one.

The district council had argued that the new building would be seriously detrimental to the history, architecture and visual character of that part of the village, and the parish council also had strong reservations about it.

After the ruling, Derek Lyon, solicitor with the district council, said: "We are disappointed to have lost the case. This was not a savage example of harmful development, but we pursued the case on a point of principle. We had hoped the courts would not take the attitude that development should be allowed if it does no harm."

Other planning authorities and conservation bodies wished to study the ruling before commenting, but an official of the Lake District special planning board said: "It is not a judgment we would feel able to welcome."

Dear Brezhnev, you're fired

BY MELINDA WITTSTOCK, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

LETTER To Brezhnev, the Cold War comedy film about a Liverpool girl who defects to Russia to be with her Russian sailor, has been sold by Channel 4 to the former Soviet Union. But citizens flocking to the 400 cinemas showing the film throughout the republics this spring will be spared any reference to their former ruler.

Channel 4 has been advised by Videofilm International, Russia's largest film distributor, that the title would cause offence in the newly-emerging democracy. The film will be called either *Letter to Yelstin* or *From Liverpool with Love*, Colin Leventhal, Channel 4's director of acquisitions and sales, said. We haven't done any research that would suggest *Letter to Brezhnev*'s title should be changed, but Videofilm suggested there might be a problem.

In the first deal of its kind between a British television channel and a Russian distributor, Channel 4 is bringing five other British films to cinemas throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States. Deals have been struck in the past with Hollywood studios, but it is the first time the 300 million population will have a chance to watch British films. They are: Mike Leigh's



Starry-eyed: the lovers in *Letter to Brezhnev*

award-winning *Life Is Sweet*; Steven Pollakoff's story of forbidden love *Close My Eyes*; Hanif Kureishi's *My Beautiful Launderette*; Maurice Hatter's *American Roulette*; and *Hear My Song*, the bizarre tale of tenor Josef Locke's disappearance which has its royal premiere in London in March.

Either dubbed into Russian or subtitled, the films will be shown on a rotating basis throughout each republic, including remote rural areas. "A print of between 50

and 100 is considered highly successful in the UK, but we're printing about 400 of each for the former Soviet republics. That's a good indication of just how big this market is," Mr Leventhal said.

Channel 4 will split the box office take with Videofilm, which is run by Oleg Uralov, the Russian Federation's deputy minister of cinematography and a friend of Mikhail Gorbachev, who is presiding over the transition to the free market.

Accident victim could get up to £4m

A road accident victim has been awarded damages which could reach £4 million in a package deal. A judge described the case as "an inspiring tale".

Paul Kessock-Philips, aged 25, suffered brain damage when he was knocked down by a motorbike near his home in Horwich, Greater Manchester, in July 1988. Mr Justice Morland, at the High Court in Manchester, yesterday approved a structured settlement under which he will receive £800,000, to be topped up over the years, and praised the victim's parents for their dedication.

Raymond Machel, QC, told the court that Mr Kessock-Philips had been left with eye contact as his only form of communication. It was feared that nothing could be done and he was sent home to his parents, Maurice and Judith. But then he was taken into the Highbank Head Injury Rehabilitation Unit in Bury, where he made a "near miraculous improvement", although he still needed constant care and attention.

After the settlement Paul's father, who now plans to take his family to live in Weymouth, Dorset, said: "This would appear to be the nearest thing to a miracle that we can imagine." The years after the accident had been "sheer hell".

Anti-poll tax leader freed

Tommy Sheridan, aged 27, leader of the anti-poll tax federation, who was jailed for six months on Tuesday after defying a court order not to attend a poll tax protest in Glasgow last year, was freed yesterday pending an appeal against conviction and sentence.

Three appeal judges said Sheridan should first undertake not to attend any sales held in lieu of a poll tax debt. The sentence had been imposed by Lord Caplan after the court was told that Sheridan had turned up the order in front of a crowd of 250 demonstrators.

Fraud charges

A businessman who last year was refused leave to sue the government for £1 million for mis-managing the economy has appeared in court on fraud charges. Mark Harries, aged 46, his wife Kay, aged 44, and his brother Paul, aged 44, were accused of conspiracy to defraud in a hearing before Cardiff magistrates, following a fire a fancy-dress hire shop.

Sin of the flesh

The Rev Chris Hudson, vicar of Hunsbury, Somerset, has banned brides from wearing off-the-shoulder wedding dresses because he does not want to see "oceans of flesh" in church.

Bright birds

Slimbridge wildlife trust in Gloucestershire is dyeing swans' bottoms canary yellow so they can be easily spotted when they return to their summer homes in Siberia.

Potter park

An American company has proposed a £75 million Beatrix Potter theme park near the A1 at Blyth, Northamptonshire, promising 350 full-time and 2,000 part-time jobs.

Nurse Major

Elizabeth Major, the prime minister's daughter, has passed the first-year exams of her two-year veterinary nursing course at the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket, Suffolk.



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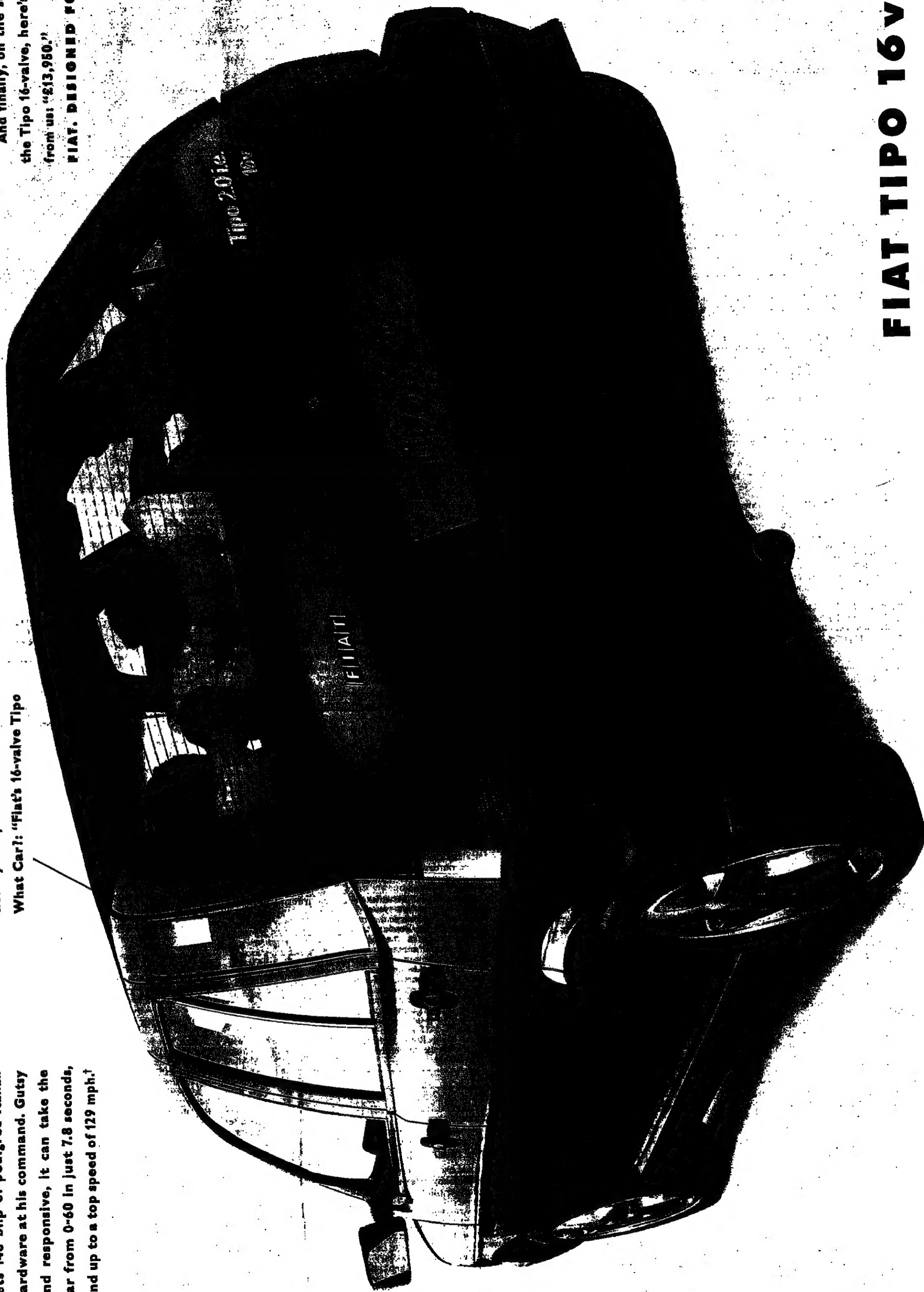
is not only a terrific performer, it's civilised, comfortable and well constructed too." (So well constructed that the car's after-care

package includes an eight year anti-perforation warranty.)

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The United Nations summit: Germany and Japan press for role as permanent powers

Major resists call to alter security council's line-up

FROM ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR, IN NEW YORK

JOHN Major yesterday made clear that Britain would resist any attempt to alter the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, on which Britain is represented with America, Russia, China and France.

He is opposing, too, any suggestion that the organisation set up a permanent standby military force. Interviewed on American television yesterday, the prime minister said that it was not sensible to "go down the byways of institutional change". It would, he said, be a "distraction" when the body was changing its role for a more active one in peace-making and peacekeeping.

Mr Major and Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary,

are resisting growing arguments that as the UN is asked to reshape its future role the so-called Big Five should be altered to reflect the changed realities of world power and to attract greater financial support from richer nations.

Mr Major yesterday pressed Kijichi Miyazawa, the Japanese prime minister whose country is currently one of the ten circulating two-year members of the 15-nation security council, to take a more active role on the world political scene. But he is opposing any moves for Japan or Germany to become members of the five.

Britain is also fighting any suggestion that the positions occupied in the five by Britain and France should be taken up by a representative of the

European Community. Nor would Britain support the incorporation of an extra member to represent Third World nations. The British argument is that you should not "change a winning team", and the present five have become the motor of the organisation.

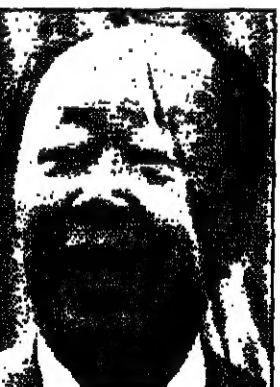
Mr Major, who convened yesterday's meeting as the current security council chairman, was anxious to use the meeting to establish both President Yeltsin of Russia and Boutros Boutros Ghali, the new secretary-general, as leading UN figures. He also wanted a mandate for Dr Boutros Ghali to revamp the United Nations to take a more positive role in future, intervening in disputes before they lead to war.

Mr Major and Mr Hurd believe that any discussion of the security council membership would divert the organisation into lengthy and unprofitable wrangles just when the ending of the Cold War, the release of hostages in Lebanon and the successful prosecution of the Gulf war under UN auspices has given the organisation a new working cohesion and effectiveness. Japan, however, made it clear yesterday that it would press for a permanent seat on the security council.

Massimiliano Marabuto, a foreign ministry spokesman, said it deserved one in view of its large contribution to the United Nations, and "the sooner the better". But he said that Japan was not expecting the change within months, and thought that the 50th anniversary of the organisation's founding, in 1995, would be an appropriate target date.

Japan's aim in seeking a permanent seat appeared to be the need to convince taxpayers at home that Tokyo had a bigger say in decision-making at a time when expensive UN peacekeeping operations are being expanded. Return to fold: Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, who ordered the suppression of pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, returned to the international fold yesterday despite persistent concern about his country's human rights record and export of missile technology (James Bone writes). He took China's seat beside other leaders at the security council table and was later to hold his first meeting with President Bush since 1989.

UN talks, page 1
Leading article, page 13



Miyazawa: urged to take an active role



World focus: Mr Major speaking to reporters outside his hotel in New York prior to the security council summit yesterday. The prime minister called for a more positive world role for the United Nations

Aid splits US and Britain

BY ROBIN OAKLEY

BRITAIN and America were at odds yesterday after a turnaround by London over economic aid for the former Soviet Union.

John Major, who refused to take such a step during President Gorbachev's tenure, is now ready to inject significant Western funds into the economy of the Commonwealth of Independent States. But President Bush is resisting British efforts to reward President Yeltsin's price liberalisation measures with a multi-million currency stabilisation fund.

Mr Bush told Mr Major on Thursday night that such a fund was some way down the track and the Americans will not be hurried over Russia's admission to the International Monetary Fund.

In a series of American television interviews yesterday, Mr Major insisted that it was vital for the Russians to be "plugged in" to the IMF swiftly both for access to advice and for the cash injection that would follow. He said that it was not crying wolf to acknowledge a real threat to the stability of the commonwealth, with prices up ten or 15-fold. He wants Mr Bush to back an IMF stabilisation fund to enable Russia to move ahead with the convertibility of the rouble.

Azerbaijani forces launch attack on disputed enclave

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE IN MOSCOW

AZERBAIJANI forces yesterday launched a land battle against Nagorno-Karabakh, deploying thousands of troops and armoured vehicles in the Armenian enclave, official sources said. As the reports emerged, the Confidence and Security and Co-operation in Europe, meeting in Prague, decided to send a fact-finding mission to the region. It will report back in three weeks.

A foreign ministry statement from Baku, the capital, said that five Azerbaijani soldiers were killed, 52 were wounded and that fighting was "continuing with the same intensity". Russian media said the operation had been launched at midday, Moscow time, from the town of Agdam, which lies close to the border of the enclave. They said that the attack was aimed at Stepanakert, the capital, about 25 miles away. Tass said that throughout



also reported that only four Azerbaijani soldiers had been killed.

The Armenian representative in Moscow accused Azerbaijan of starting war against the disputed enclave, but he gave no details of Armenian casualties. On Thursday Ayaz Mursibov, the prime minister of Azerbaijan, called for the reinforcement of the republic's national guard "as fast as possible" after tension grew in the region.

An Azerbaijani civilian helicopter in Nagorno-Karabakh was shot down this week, killing about 40 people, in an action that the nationalist Popular Front of Azerbaijan blamed on Armenians. At least ten people were killed the day before when Azerbaijani paramilitary forces attacked the Shusha region.

The Nega agency said that the Khramort region had been captured by Azerbaijani forces. Turan, the Azerbaijani news agency, confirmed the report and said the village of Farukh had also been taken. Turan said yesterday's operation was in response to an attack by Armenian forces the day before on the villages of Abdal and Gulabli, in the Agdam region.

In Prague, Houssein Sadychov, the Azerbaijan foreign minister, said after the European security council meeting that the operation in Nagorno-Karabakh had been launched as a result of "increasing terrorist acts" by Armenians. He said it was being carried out by militia and police rather than by the army. It had been, undertaken, because "lives were in danger".

Mikhail takes bow as honest broker

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

In his first interview with the Russian press since he stepped down, Mikhail Gorbachev launched himself as the elder statesman with an offer to act as a peace broker in the Middle East.

Just over a month after his humiliating resignation, the former Soviet president clearly relished the attention of the Middle Eastern foreign ministers who conferred in Moscow this week but found time to drop in on his newly established policy tank known as the Gorbachev Fund.

In an interview with the liberal daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Mr Gorbachev confessed: "In all honesty it has been extremely pleasant that so many ministers have knocked so persistently on my door and asked for meetings."

The former Soviet leader would not have been human if he had not taken some satisfaction in the contrast between his own warm encounters with the Israeli and Arab visitors and the chilly way in which Boris Yeltsin, the Russian president, failed at the last minute to appear before them.

His visitors included the representatives of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and

Jordan, but it was clearly the visit of David Levy, the Israeli foreign minister, which left the deepest impression.

As well as exchanging quips about Moses and the promised land, the two appeared to have engaged in a flurry of mutual congratulation over the process that led to free Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union and the restoration of diplomatic ties between Israel and Moscow.

Mr Gorbachev disclosed that the kings of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, as well as the government of Israel, were pressing him to visit their countries. "I think I will take advantage of these invitations," he said, adding with disarming frankness: "I have never been to the Middle East and I think it might be worth going." His long-standing acquaintance with many of the region's political players should enable him to "discuss openly the most sharp and painful of problems and co-operate with the search for solutions", he said.

Referring to his Middle East aspirations, he remarked enigmatically: "That comes later — now it is necessary to be here."

Georgia ready to restore monarchy

Madrid: Georgia will restore a monarchy this year and plans to offer the throne to Irakli Bagration, aged 19, whose family lives in Spain and who is a descendant of the Georgian royal family that was deposed in 1801, the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* said yesterday.

Reporting from Moscow, the newspaper quoted two Georgian political leaders as saying that they would travel to Spain next week, with the intention of bringing Mr Bagration to Tbilisi. (Reuters)

Naval battle

Moscow: President Kravchuk of Ukraine has demanded the removal of Admiral Igor Kasatonov, head of the Black Sea fleet, a navy official said. Russia wants the fleet to be part of a joint strategic force, while Ukraine claims the bulk of the ships for itself. (Reuters)

Party defiance

Moscow: Members of the banned Communist party of the Soviet Union plan to hold their 29th party congress some time in March and April, according to Sergei Skorov, a former party leader quoted by Interfax news agency. (AFP)

Ethnic justice

Moscow: Two German districts have been re-established in Kirghizia on the orders of President Akayev. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported. They were dissolved by Stalin in 1941. Mr Akayev said: "Justice must be restored to the German people." (AFP)

Sweet nothing

Moscow: Cosmonauts on board the Mir space station have been deprived of their usual supplies of honey by the food problems in the Commonwealth of Independent States and could suffer from other general shortages, Tass news agency said. (AFP)

Union leader

Paris: A leading Communist, Louis Vianet, has been chosen as secretary-general of the Confédération Générale du Travail, the French trade union federation. The organisation's new ruling bureau has eight Communists and six non-Communists. (AFP)

Tigers accused

Madras: A court here charged in their absence Vellupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and his intelligence chief in connection with the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, India's former prime minister. (Reuters)

Priest block

Sydney: Tomorrow's proposed ordination of Australia's first Anglican women priests has been blocked by a New South Wales appeal court decision preventing Bishop Owen Dowling of Canberra from independently ordaining 11 women.

Eight wounded

Algiers: Eight people were hit by security forces who opened fire to stop Islamic fundamentalists gathering after prayers. Fifteen people were arrested for incitement to hold banned meetings and disobedience, the Algerian news agency said. (Reuters)

Counter move

Moscow: McDonald's here is to stop charging a 28 per cent value added tax, imposed this year, to entice customers back. Because of queues at the restaurant formerly, diners talked of the slowest fast food in the world. (Reuters)

Yeltsin wants 'Star Wars' as global defence

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

PRESIDENT Yeltsin of Russia suggested yesterday putting former Soviet nuclear scientists to work turning the American "Star Wars" programme into a global defence system.

In his maiden speech at the United Nations, the president told the security council summit that the fate of the former Soviet scientist had become a top priority. "Russia is fully aware of its own responsibility and is taking steps to provide social security to such experts," Mr Yeltsin said. "At the same time, we support the idea of establishing international centres which could co-ordinate appropriate research and support the most promising areas of work."

The Russian president said he thought the time had come to consider creating a "global system for protection of the world community. It could be based on a reorientation of the US Strategic Defence Initiative to make use of high-technologies developed in Russia's defence complex."

Mr Yeltsin's aides said afterwards that he envisaged former Soviet nuclear scientists working in international institutes to develop the Star Wars-based global defence system. His speech showed some continuity from those delivered at the UN in recent years by Mikhail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union.

President Yeltsin emphasised that states should respect the "principle of minimum defence sufficiency", committing themselves to limiting their armed forces to the level necessary purely for defence. He also repeated earlier Soviet calls for the creation of a UN rapid deployment force. But he went much further in his description of Moscow's defence policy.

"Russia considers the United States and the West not as mere partners but rather as allies," he said. "It is a basic

prerequisite for, I would say, a revolution in peaceful co-operation among civilised nations. We reject any subordination of foreign policy to pure ideology or ideological doctrines. Our principles are clear and simple: supremacy of democracy, human rights and freedoms, legal and moral standards."

With Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, Mr Yeltsin is the most widely watched visitor to New York. Nicknamed "Boris the boomer" by the tabloids, Mr Yeltsin has had to fight poor publicity about his drinking habits during his last visit to America. For Mr Yeltsin's benefit, the tabloid *New York Post* yesterday printed a guide to Russian bars near the Russian mission where he is staying, under the headline "It's a good town to be a Russian out for a drink."

● Moscow: A top Russian nuclear scientist has scorned Western fears that his colleagues would sell their services to Third World countries bent on acquiring atomic weapons (Bruce Clark writes). Professor Valeri Mikhailov, the director of Russia's nuclear weapons programme, insisted in yesterday's *Komsomolskaya Pravda* that his fellow scientists have made deals with Japan or other Eastern countries have no basis in reality," he said.

However, in the course of his reassuring message, he disclosed new figures about the size of the Soviet nuclear establishment which bring home the difficulty of keeping it intact. He said a total of 100,000 people in the former Soviet Union had worked in the nuclear weapon industry,

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مكتبة الملك

Vultures find rich pickings in Sudanese rebel feuding



Al-Bashir: taking advantage of schism

RESPLENDENT in a red beret and staff-officer collar, Commander Riak sits in a mud hut on the Ethiopian-Sudanese border. The leader of a breakaway group of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, which split with the movement's long-time leader, Dr John Garang, in August last year, is evasive about his clashes with Dr Garang's forces, predominantly Dinka tribesmen who are now known as the Torit faction after their base further south on the Ugandan frontier.

Their first encounter, at Bor on the banks of the White Nile, ended in the rout of Dr Garang's men and the mass killing of between 2,000 and 5,000 civilians. The murders were recorded on video by a worker with the Norwegian People's Aid organisation, and witnessed by members of

Brutal infighting in the guerrilla Sudan
People's Liberation Army has left it open to attack by Khartoum's forces, Sam Kiley reports from southern Sudan

the United Nations World Food Programme.

The bodies of women and children tied up and speared, of old men garrotted and shot, and of thousands of cattle killed or blinded with pangas, were also catalogued by a doctor from the British-based charity, Health Unlimited. The bodies still litter the road to Mongalla, and vultures and wild dogs howled off the corpses. The killings occurred last month when the victims were fleeing south with 200,000 other refugees. Mutilating the cattle was an especially cruel act, aimed at hurting the Dinka, who virtu-

ally worship their cows and treat the animals like members of the family.

"I was in radio contact with my officers in the field every moment of the battle. Of course, we are very worried and upset by the deaths of the civilians, but they were killed in crossfire. The fighting was very heavy, with a lot of heavy weapons being used, and it was inevitable that civilians would be killed. But there was no massacre," Commander Riak said.

The commander, an industrial engineer with a master's degree from Strathclyde University and a doctorate

from Bradford, is a member of the Nuer tribe — the next largest to the Dinka. He was anxious to dispel the view that the Sudan People's Liberation Army, which for eight years has been fighting the Islamic government in Khartoum for control of the Christian and animist south of Sudan, was now irrevocably riven along tribal lines.

"The battle at Bor and the basis of the split is in response to Garang's dictatorial attitude, his human rights abuses, and the forced recruitment of children into the guerrilla army. I do not just represent the Nuer but all the tribes, including the Dinka," Commander Riak said.

The town of Bor has now been retaken by Dr Garang's men, but when it fell to the Nuer, the arch-rivals of the Dinka, their traditional hatred of the Dinka apparently

got the better of them, according to aid workers on the scene. "Hundreds of half or totally naked Nuer swept through the city armed with AK47s and shot and stabbed anything that moved," one aid worker said.

Since the split in the rebel army, President al-Bashir, Sudan's military ruler, is said to have ordered huge troop movements from Sennar, southeast of Khartoum, and from southern Kordofan to the battle zone. In the current dry season the vast swamps surrounding Nasir, on the banks of the Salongo river, and south to Juba, are accessible, and Commander Riak is expecting an assault on the liberation army's positions from the north.

Both factions of the rebel army are scheduled to hold ceasefire talks in Nairobi next month and have agreed a

temporary halt to hostilities. However, Dr Garang, who has launched the biggest attack in several years on Juba, the last southern redoubt of Khartoum's forces, in which at least 100 people were killed. Control of Juba would give the rebels total control of the southern half of Sudan.

"We know that Khartoum is delighted with our infighting and that is why we are not assaulting Garang's positions at the moment," Commander Riak said, acknowledging that since President al-Bashir recently signed a \$300 million (£168 million) trade pact with Iran, which is also supplying Silkworm missiles and other weapons to his National Islamic Front, the rebel army looks increasingly vulnerable.

Moreover, Iranian Revolutionary Guards are claimed to be training militias in Sennar, and both rebel army

factions fear that the Iranian troops, who also have a presence in Juba, may soon take an active role in fighting.

But as the swamps of Nasir crack into slabs in the dry heat, Commander Riak waits for the return of his British wife, Emma McCune, aged 27, who Dr Garang once blamed for the dispute with Riak, calling it "Emma's Split", and for the schism that he created to heal. "The longer this split goes on the harder it will be for it to heal and the easier it will be for Khartoum to attack us. If this goes on I fear the Sudan could collapse like Liberia or Somalia. Garang must subject himself to free elections within the movement and we should all bow to the will of the people. He believes he can crush us, but he cannot, he does not have the forces," Commander Riak said.

Democrats line up to enter race

Runners struggle in the campaign mire

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

E most dramatic week of 1992 presidential campaign drew to a close yesterday with almost every candidate a loser. A new poll confirmed the fact that President Bush's re-elected State of the Union speech on Tuesday had fallen flat. Bill Clinton, Democratic party candidate, managed to stay in the despite charges of adultery, but some party strategists believe he has been badly wounded. Mr Clinton's troubles so monopolised the media that the upswing of his lesser-known Democratic rivals, dying on their feet, poorly were Mr Bush's opponents faring that name Democrats like

Richard Gephardt, the House leader, and Senators Lloyd Bentsen and Al Gore were widely reported to be reconsidering their earlier decisions not to run. Vice-President Dan Quayle yesterday predicted that Mario Cuomo, New York's governor, would end up as the Democratic nominee.

The White House had touted the State of the Union speech as the defining moment of Mr Bush's presidency, but it played at best to lukewarm reviews and a Washington Post poll yesterday showed 70 per cent of people believed the economic recovery package was inadequate. The speech lifted Mr Bush's approval ratings by a single point to 46 per cent.

"The president gave the State of the Union message the very best he had in him, and that's the saddest part of all," A.M. Rosenthal, the New York Times columnist, wrote yesterday. Even White House insiders lamented that it contained nothing to inspire Republicans to go out and campaign for Mr Bush. Senior Republicans in California are warning the president that America's biggest state could fall to the Democrats for the first time in three decades.

By late in the week, Mr Clinton's aides claimed the media "feeding frenzy" was abating and the Arkansas governor's personal ordeal was over. Fund-raising had, if anything, been boosted and polls showed he remained the front runner in New Hampshire, where the crucial first primary is 18 days away.

The longer-term damage is harder to gauge. The party had begun to unite behind Mr Clinton because of his evident "electability", but some Democrats now believe his admission of unspecified past dalliances could prove too much of a liability. Polls show a public divided on whether to believe his denials of a 12-year affair with Gennifer Flowers, a former nightclub singer, and that roughly 15 per cent would never vote for a candidate known to have had an extra-marital affair. There is also the danger of other women coming forward, and if Mr Clinton wins the Democratic nomination he will be fighting a president who will campaign ruthlessly on family values.

Normally when a front runner stumbles, those trailing catch him up, but not in this case. While Mr Clinton has instantly become a household name, they have been sliding back into obscurity.

"This reminds me of the Cuomo-watch," complained Paul Tsongas, the former Massachusetts senator, referring to the fact that Mr Cuomo's ditherings completely overshadowed the declared candidates throughout the autumn.

There was one other loser this week. Ms Flowers was sacked from her \$17,000-a-year (£9,500) Arkansas state job for unauthorised absence. Officials insisted that Mr Clinton was not involved in the decision.

Showbiz and Justice, page 12



Cheer leader: Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, a Democratic presidential candidate, helping Hillary Clinton, wife of the Arkansas governor, see the lighter side of politics at a party dinner in Washington

Ford joins chorus on Kennedy files

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

RALD Ford, the former president, has added his voice to those demanding release of the sealed files relating to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in the new JFK act that the CIA, the Pentagon and other government agencies were responsible. Mr Ford, sole surviving member of the Warren Commission that investigated the assassination, has written to Thomas Foley, the Speaker, urging publication of all relevant documents to "resolve any legitimate doubts" about a government conspiracy. Mr Ford's film suggests elements of America's tory-industrial complex government agencies and Kennedy as he wanted and drew from Vietnam. The mission concluded in that Lee Harvey Oswald acted on his own, and 2 per cent of its records are classified. But Mr Ford also called for the disclosure of all relevant CIA documents and those of the assassinations committee which concluded in 1979 Kennedy's death was solely the result of a conspiracy.

Ford urged that a new set of scientists be established to review the acoustic

evidence which led the house investigation to conclude that a fourth shot was fired at the president, not by Oswald.

Since the release of JFK, many senior congressmen, including Louis Stokes, the Ohio Democrat who chaired the house investigation, Edward Kennedy, the murdered president's brother, and Mr Foley, have said that they favour publication of most of the committee's 849 boxes of records, officially sealed until 2029. A congressional resolution has been introduced but not yet voted on. The New York Times and other influential publications have called for full disclosure. This week 13 staff members of the Warren Commission joined the chorus, though presidential approval would be required for the release of secret government material. Those privy to the two investigations claim the sealed documents will show nothing new, but want the record set straight.

Stone issued a statement from Rome welcoming calls for full disclosure. "After 28 years of defending the indefensible, the Warren Commission staff members accuse me of corrupting the truth and of irresponsibility. But responsible people would have begun an investigation years ago."

Alarm over spate of 'kaffir killing'

FROM GAVIN BELL IN CAPE TOWN

AN OUTBREAK of "kaffir killing" in South Africa has fuelled racial tensions and alarmed blacks living near conservative white communities. In three incidents in the past two weeks, 12 people have been killed and 23 injured by white men using pistols or automatic rifles. Most of the victims were blacks shot at random in streets and shopping centres.

In each case the killing spree appears to have been sparked by a domestic dispute with no political motive, but the targeting of innocent blacks has raised fears of a race war. The man blamed for the most recent attack, on Wednesday, is under guard in a hospital in the eastern Transvaal, having had his right arm amputated after it was shattered by police gunfire. Down the corridor, in a ward reserved for blacks, five of his victims are recovering from gunshot wounds.

Cornelius de Vaal, aged 24, who has instructed staff not to allow black journalists into his ward, told white reporters he had flown into a rage when his girlfriend ended their relationship. "I begged her to come back to me, but she said I must go." With no sign of remorse, he said: "That's why I zapped so many kaffirs."

A police spokesman said Mr de Vaal had fired a shot at the girl and a male friend with a 9mm pistol, but missed. "He then drove to a car showroom where he shot a black man in the right ankle. From there he drove to a railway station, where he shot two black men standing in the street, hitting one in the wrist and the other in both knees. Then he turned back to a municipal police station, where he shot three guys in the street, one of whom died on the spot." Mr de Vaal then fired at a police officer who shot him five times.

Burmese deploy suicide squads

FROM AHMED FAZL IN COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH

THE Burmese military junta has dispatched suicide squads to its border with Bangladesh after a bloody clash between Burmese security forces and Muslim rebels.

Intelligence sources said yesterday that a 500-strong squad of the Burmese army's 532nd regiment had been mobilised on the border near the strategic town of Dumru where Muslim rebels ambushed a military patrol on Thursday, killing seven soldiers. The sources, monitoring developments from the town of Cox's Bazar, said rebels of the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front engaged Burmese border forces near the garrison town of Maungdaw. The clashes resulted in more than a dozen deaths.

The fighting started a military offensive against suspected rebel strongholds. Two villages near Dumru were set ablaze and 15 people, including four children, were burnt

alive. The sources said that the suicide squads, apparently young recruits, had been deployed in the wake of deadlocked border talks between the two countries last Tuesday.

Burma has accused Bangladesh of providing sanctuary to the Muslim guerrillas who are campaigning for autonomy in the western Arakan province. Officials estimated that at least 85,000 Burmese troops had been deployed along the border and said regular military manoeuvres were taking place.

Another thousand Muslim refugees arrived at Cox's Bazar, having been ferried across the river Naf on Thursday. Fayaz Ahmad, a student at Rangoon University, said that the Burmese authorities had sent the army to 13 predominantly Muslim towns in Arakan province in an attempt to root out the guerrillas.

Keating runs down the Union Jack

Sydney: With the Queen due to visit Australia this month, Paul Keating, the prime minister, chose yesterday to announce that it was high time the Union Jack was removed from the Australian national flag. (Robert Cockburn writes)

Setting a decidedly republican tone in his first weeks as Australia's prime minister, Mr Keating said: "I suppose people around the world are entitled to say: 'Well, look at your flag. You've got the flag of another country in the corner. I mean are you a colony or are you a nation?'"

Mr Keating, the first Australian leader publicly to advocate the change, was responding to a national campaign launched last week to remove the Union Jack and leave the distinctive Southern Cross constellation as the national emblem.

Legal tender

Taipei: The Taiwanese high court has recognised as legal tender the currency of mainland China, the island's arch-enemy. The judgement is a landmark ruling on the renminbi, which means "people's money", as Taiwan does not recognise China. (Reuters)

Temper taxed

Los Angeles: An engineer, said to have become angry when income tax authorities disallowed \$8,500 (£4,775) in deductions, was sentenced to 20 years in jail for making car-bomb and mortar attacks on tax offices. He was also fined \$45,000. (Reuters)

Role for son

Phnom Penh: The Cambodian national assembly has replaced two deputy prime ministers, appointing Prince Norodom Chakrapong, a son of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the head of state, and Sar Kheng, leader of the ruling People's party. (AFP)

Earthly call

Bogotá: A Colombian nun, Marneta Pena Jacanamajoy, has decided to hang up her habit and stand for mayor after the people of Santa Rosa, a poor town of 5,000 in Cauca province, persuaded her to run for office. No one has yet opposed her. (AFP)

Syphilis threat

Atlanta: A syphilis epidemic caused by the widespread sex-for-drugs trade has worsened in the South but has declined in the Midwest, the American Centres for Disease Control reported. (Reuters)

Dry measure

Manila: The Philippines is to be alcohol-free for 24 hours this weekend to allow an orderly voter registration for the spring elections, the electoral commission said. The sale, purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages would be illegal. (AFP)

Marine mystery

Hanoi: American officials said two sets of remains, alleged by Phnom Penh to be those of two marines missing since a May 1975 clash with the Khmer Rouge and handed over earlier this month, were not those of American servicemen. (AFP)

Cash bonus

Tokyo: A dentist in Osaka who was shot in the chest by a gunman was saved from serious injury by his wallet. Hiroshi Oyama, aged 62, was carrying 242,000 yen (£1,068) in cash and the bullet was lodged in the bundle of notes. (AP)

Shamir relies on peacemaker image for election victory

YITZHAK Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, predicted yesterday that his country's negotiators would for the first time deliver concrete proposals for Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories when the two sides resume talks in just over a week.

In an interview at his office in Jerusalem, he said that he planned to pursue Middle East peace talks regardless of the Israeli general elections, scheduled for June 23. "It would be a very good excuse for stopping the negotiations, but we are not looking for excuses," Mr Shamir told The Times and two other European papers.

The last round of talks in Washington ended inconclusively, partly as a result of the threatened departure of two right-wing parties from the coalition government. The parties oppose granting self-rule to the 1.8 million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank

and Gaza Strip. The Mofet and Tzviya parties subsequently resigned from the government, depriving Mr Shamir of his Knesset majority, but widening his room for manoeuvre at the negotiating table.

"We have lost our majority in the Knesset because of faithfulness to our commitments. We are in the middle of preparing our plans for the upcoming talks with the Arab countries and the Palestinians, and I think that in the next series of talks we will have to discuss these matters of autonomy," said the Israeli leader, aged 76, who appeared fit and relaxed on the verge of what is likely to be a five-month period of electioneering.

Although Mr Shamir described the Palestinian negotiators as inexperienced and "stronger on propaganda than on the talks between parties", he will, ironically, be relying on his

The Israeli prime minister wants to persevere with talks on Palestinian autonomy in the poll run-up, reports Richard Beeston from Jerusalem

traditional foes to help him win re-election. The peace talks, once treated with great suspicion by the Israeli leader, now form the central theme of his re-election campaign, aimed at convincing voters that only Likud can deliver a peaceful end to the 43-year conflict.

Mr Shamir, who said he would remain as Likud leader as long as he enjoyed the support of his followers, appeared confident of leading his party to victory. However, he conceded that his government faced serious difficulties on economic matters and in absorbing hundreds of thousands of new immigrants, a problem he described as "a mission impossible". Opinion polls

published yesterday suggested that he is losing support to the opposition Labour party, largely because of growing unemployment and rising inflation, which this month reduced the flow of immigration from the former Soviet Union to a two-year low. The Smith Research Institute poll, published in the Hebrew daily Davar, revealed that 80 per cent of Israelis are dissatisfied with the government's handling of the economy and 64 per cent disapprove of Mr Shamir's overall performance as prime minister.

Part of his problem is that vital American assistance in the form of \$10 billion (£5.88 billion) in loan guar-



Shamir: confident of success for Likud

antees, has been held up by an unprecedented dispute over Mr Shamir's insistence on continuing to expand Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, in defiance of objections from the White House.

"It is a very complicated matter because, on the one hand, we are very interested

in the guarantees," said Mr Shamir, visibly perturbed by the dilemma. "On the other hand, we cannot link these guarantees to principles of our national policy."

The problem for Mr Shamir, who entered politics in the 1930s as a member of the notorious Jewish underground Stern Gang, is likely to grow more acute as the election date approaches and the conflicting aspects of his re-election policy, such as wanting the settlements and the loan guarantees, come under closer public scrutiny. However, Mr Shamir's uncompromising stand on security could well swing the election in his favour. "It is very easy to promise solutions with the price of concessions on the part of Israel. None of our citizens is very enthusiastic about making concessions on the matter of our security. We know our neighbours," the prime minister said laughing.

Party fight: Moshe Arens, the Israeli defence minister, yesterday said he was determined to secure the number two post in the governing Likud bloc, which is currently occupied by David Levy, the foreign minister.

Speaking on army radio, Mr Arens said that "this time I will not give in" — a reference to his decision in 1988 to let Mr Levy have the post for the sake of party unity and peace.

Mr Levy, seen as a moderate, did not immediately react to what the radio commentator described as a "declaration of war". But those close to him said that he was prepared to retaliate against Mr Shamir, according to Israeli newspapers. The number two spot is considered vital in the struggle to succeed Mr Shamir. Ariel Sharon, the housing minister and Likud hardliner, is the only declared contender for the leadership. (AFP)

Demand for cabinet resignations

Habash is placed in Paris police custody

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

THE storm over the French government's decision to admit George Habash, the Palestinian guerrilla leader, for emergency treatment in Paris intensified yesterday with opposition demands for the resignation of cabinet ministers involved.

As judicial authorities formally placed Dr Habash in police custody, possibly opening the way to arrest on charges of terrorism, the scandal that has claimed the jobs of four government advisers gathered momentum.

Dr Habash's radical organisation, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, insisted yesterday that its leader's urgent transfer to France after suffering a stroke in Tunis had been cleared at the highest level in Paris. Speaking from Amman, a representative claimed there had been "an official and political agreement with the French government which involved the foreign and interior ministries, as well as the Elysée palace". The French government had given the go-ahead for the French Red Cross to send an aircraft to collect Dr Habash, the front official maintained. "They also arranged for security for him at the hospital."

There was no immediate reaction to this statement in the Elysée yesterday, nor to reports that the front had

issued a warning from its base in Damascus that the controversy in France had acquired "dangerous dimensions that require holding the French government responsible for the life of Dr Habash".

For its part, the French Red Cross, whose director, George



Duffoix: resigned as president's adviser

ina Duffoix, resigned as an adviser to President Mitterrand immediately the affair became public, is adamant that the offices of Roland Dumas, the foreign minister, and Philippe Marchand, minister of the interior, had been kept fully briefed. Its spokesman said in Paris yesterday that the request from the Tunisian Red Crescent organisation to accept him for treatment had been notified to both ministries last

Monday and that the Quai d'Orsay had formally authorised the transfer.

The humiliation that this hideously bungled affair has already caused President Mitterrand — who left for New York yesterday to attend the special session of the United Nations Security Council — suggests that more heads will probably roll. Kept in the dark about the arrival of Dr Habash until he had embarked on an official visit to Oman, M Mitterrand reportedly returned to Paris on Wednesday night in a cold fury.

With the French media virtually united in bitter criticism of the Socialist government — "France at the criminal's bedside," raged *Le Quotidien* newspaper — Edith Cresson is now facing her most serious challenge as prime minister.

The Israeli embassy in Paris increased the pressure on the government yesterday. The chargé d'affaires, Yitzhak Eldan, expressed Israel's dismay that "the head of one of the world's cruellest terrorist groups should be offered a welcome by France". Israel also hinted that it might ask France to extradite Dr Habash to stand trial for murdering Israeli citizens. The Jewish state holds the popular front responsible for numerous attacks over the last 25 years.

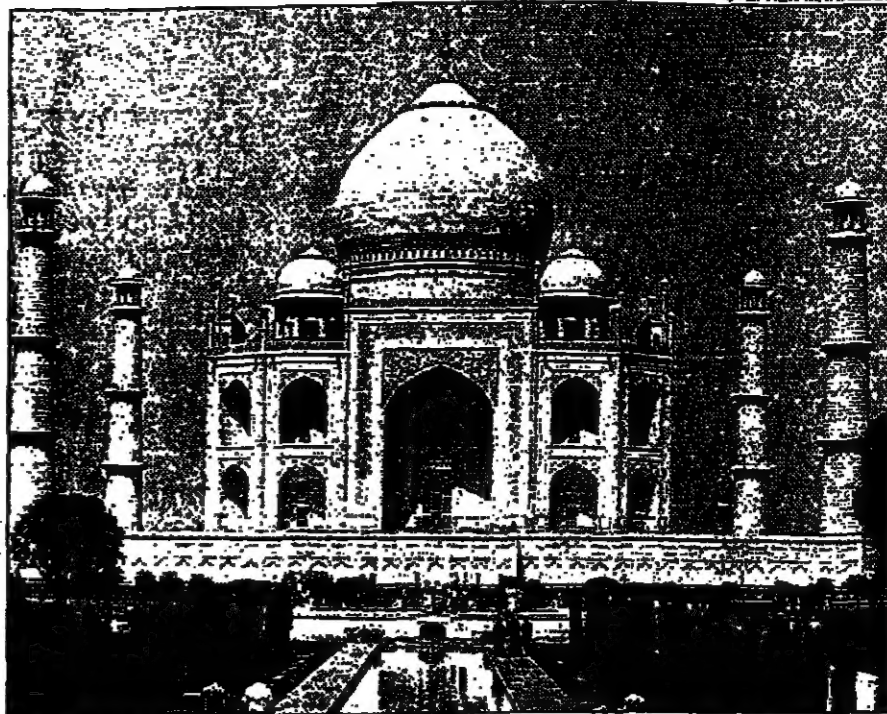
Pollution eats into India's marble glory

The Taj Mahal's beauty is being ruined by acid rain, Christopher Thomas writes from Agra

THE Taj Mahal, shrouded by dust, smoke and exhaust fumes, appears to be turning yellow. Some of the marble is flaking, perhaps from the effects of acid rain. Viewed from Agra fort a mile away, the structure is barely visible through a curtain of smog.

Environmentalists say the Taj is being irreparably damaged by pollution. Less than 30 miles away a government-owned oil refinery at Mathura is allowed to pump a ton of sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere every day. The area immediately around the Taj is a bedlam of unrestricted traffic. There are 179 legally registered iron foundries nearby, plus many illegal establishments. The slums of Agra, a city of six million, fill the atmosphere with smoke from winter fires.

The government insists that pollution is not damaging the Taj. But data produced by the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board shows that the amount of suspended particles in the atmosphere is almost always five or six times higher than the government's estimate of what the structure can endure without harm. The maximum recommended levels of sulphur dioxide and



Mirror of decay: the Taj Mahal is being threatened by irreparable damage

oxides of nitrogen are frequently exceeded.

The Indian Supreme Court has agreed for the first time to hear arguments about the alleged pollution threat, marking a significant victory for environmental lawyers who have tried for years to get the case heard. A petition submitted in 1984, which will form the basis of the hearing, says the Taj is suffering from "marble cancer" caused by acid rain.

Sunil Kumar Singh, an environmental engineer and the regional officer of Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board, said that there was

evidence of "decomposition" which was affecting the outer appearance of the marble. "The colour is yellowish," he added. But some of this could be attributed to unavoidable ageing. The Taj was battered by sandstorms from the Thar desert and was subjected to summer heat. He said it was not clear to what extent man-made conditions were responsible for discolouring the structure.

Government engineers say that several pieces of marble have had to be replaced. Many iron clamps used to hold marble slabs together have rusted; these

are regularly replaced by stainless steel and titanium. Expansion and contraction of the iron may be responsible for cracks that have appeared in many large marble blocks. Replacement stones are most evident in one of the minarets, where new blocks appear brilliant white against the old.

M.C. Mehra, a Delhi lawyer who is taking the case to the supreme court, claims that there is a cover-up to conceal the seriousness of the pollution threat. "There is a lack of bureaucratic will to do anything. The government has issued many environmental guidelines, but

who follows them? Agra city is choking with smoke and the Taj is visibly yellowing."

His petition to the supreme court declares: "In places the yellow hue is magnified by ugly brown and black spots. Fungal deterioration is worst in the inner chamber where the original graves of Shah Jehan and Mumtaz Mahal lie."

Shankar Nath, superintendent of the Agra office of the Archaeological Survey of India, said some marble blocks had been replaced because of flaking, although the problem was "negligible." As for discolouring of the stone, he declared: "It is difficult to say what colour the Taj is. It is a monument of moods. It depends on the light and the time of day."

There have long been demands for traffic restrictions around the Taj, which is nearly 350 years old, but traffic has been allowed to increase unchecked with the rapid growth of Agra. The government has banned new industries from within a radius of about 35 miles around the mausoleum, but those that were there before 1983 can legally remain. A steam train shunting yard near the Taj has been closed.

Whether these measures are enough will be the subject of the supreme court hearing, which could still take an extremely long time to be heard because of the slowness of the legal system. One of the main recommendations it will consider is for the Mathura refinery to be ordered to stop polluting the atmosphere or move somewhere else.

German steel union wins strike backing

FROM IAN MURRAY IN BONN

GERMANY'S steelworkers have overwhelmingly voted in favour of strike action to back a 10.5 per cent pay claim. Ignoring a series of recent warnings from the government and the Bundesbank that high wage settlements will undermine the economy, almost 87 per cent of members instructed their union, IG Metall, to launch a campaign of industrial action for pay rises above the latest 5.7 per cent on offer.

The union represents 100,000 of the 135,000 workers in the Ruhr and northwest, where most of Germany's steel industry is concentrated. The small Christian metalworkers' union did not ballot its members but has promised to give full backing to any industrial action. IG Metall is confident that feelings on the shop floor are running so high that members are prepared for an even longer stoppage than during the last steel dispute in 1979: that lasted 44 days and cost the industry 450 million marks.

Union officials are to meet on Monday to consider the result. They hope that the huge vote for industrial action will persuade employers to make an improved offer before stoppages commence.

But any strike action will not be possible before next Wednesday, and it will probably be the following week before large-scale action begins. Given that the two sides were less than 1 per cent apart on a wage deal when negotiations broke down a

week ago, a compromise is still possible.

The size of the strike vote reflects how inflation rates of more than 4 per cent have increased militancy in the four months since the negotiations began. Higher taxation to pay for unification has eroded pay packets and pushed up the cost of living. The steelworkers feel particularly victimised since their claim should have been settled last year, when other unions were winning an average of 6.7 per cent wage rises. Their mood over the past week has been summed up by members outside polling booths waving placards reading "Our anger is great and is still growing".

The union has the funds to provide adequate strike pay for at least two months, and believes employers lack the will to hold out that long. There are now signs that a long period of decline in the engineering industry is coming to an end, with orders for German plant and machinery rising in December for the first time in a year. The union calculates that the steel producers will not risk losing orders through a long strike.

The government is, nevertheless, looking to the employers to hold a line against any settlements above last year's average. Bank employees and postal workers have begun staging a series of warning strikes in support of 10 per cent pay claims, and other industries are poised to exploit any gains made by the powerful steelworkers.



Deaths in Kosovo hit UN hopes

FROM TIM JUDAH AND DESSA TREVISAN IN BELGRADE

SERBIAN politicians gathered for emergency talks yesterday as the peace process brokered by the United Nations for Yugoslavia and Croatia was threatened again by a fresh outbreak of violence.

Milan Babic, the militant leader of Croatia's breakaway Serb enclaves, was summoned to explain why he rejected the UN plan to a Serb-dominated federal presidency, but it became clear that he was not only an objector. The Croat leaders issued headline statements that were guaranteed to harm the plan.

The presidency gathered shooting was reported in Kosovo, a Serbian province where an Albanian population of two million people, renewed fears of continued unrest in the region. Fehmi Agani, vice-president of the Democratic League of Kosovo, said that Serbian police had killed three parents who were taking their children to school.

The police said that had died in Uce, west Pristina, the regional capital, after a group of villagers stoned and shot at the police.

Rape case woman admits to seeking Tyson's attention

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN INDIANAPOLIS

DESIREE Washington, who accused Mike Tyson, the former heavyweight boxing champion of rape, told the court yesterday that she had sought his attention at a beauty pageant but had no interest in a relationship.

The Miss Black America contestant said she was surprised but not alarmed when Tyson kissed her after she got into his car before the alleged attack on July 19. "Did you have some hopes of establishing a relationship with Tyson?" the defence lawyer, Vincent Fuller, asked during cross-examination. "I would never see him again," she said. "How could I hope to have any relationship with him?"

Mr Fuller described her in his opening statement as an angry woman seeking revenge against Tyson for treating her indifferently

ly after she consented to sex. Ms Washington told Mr Fuller that she and other contestants were excited at the prospect of meeting Tyson when he appeared to promote the pageant.

"Did you seek to get his attention?" he asked. "Yes," she said.

"How did you do that?" he asked.

"I asked him to take a picture with us," she replied. She added that she wrote her hotel telephone and room numbers on a piece of paper and handed it to Tyson after he asked for a date. "I was excited about the prospect, the idea, but at that point I didn't really think anything was going to happen," she said.

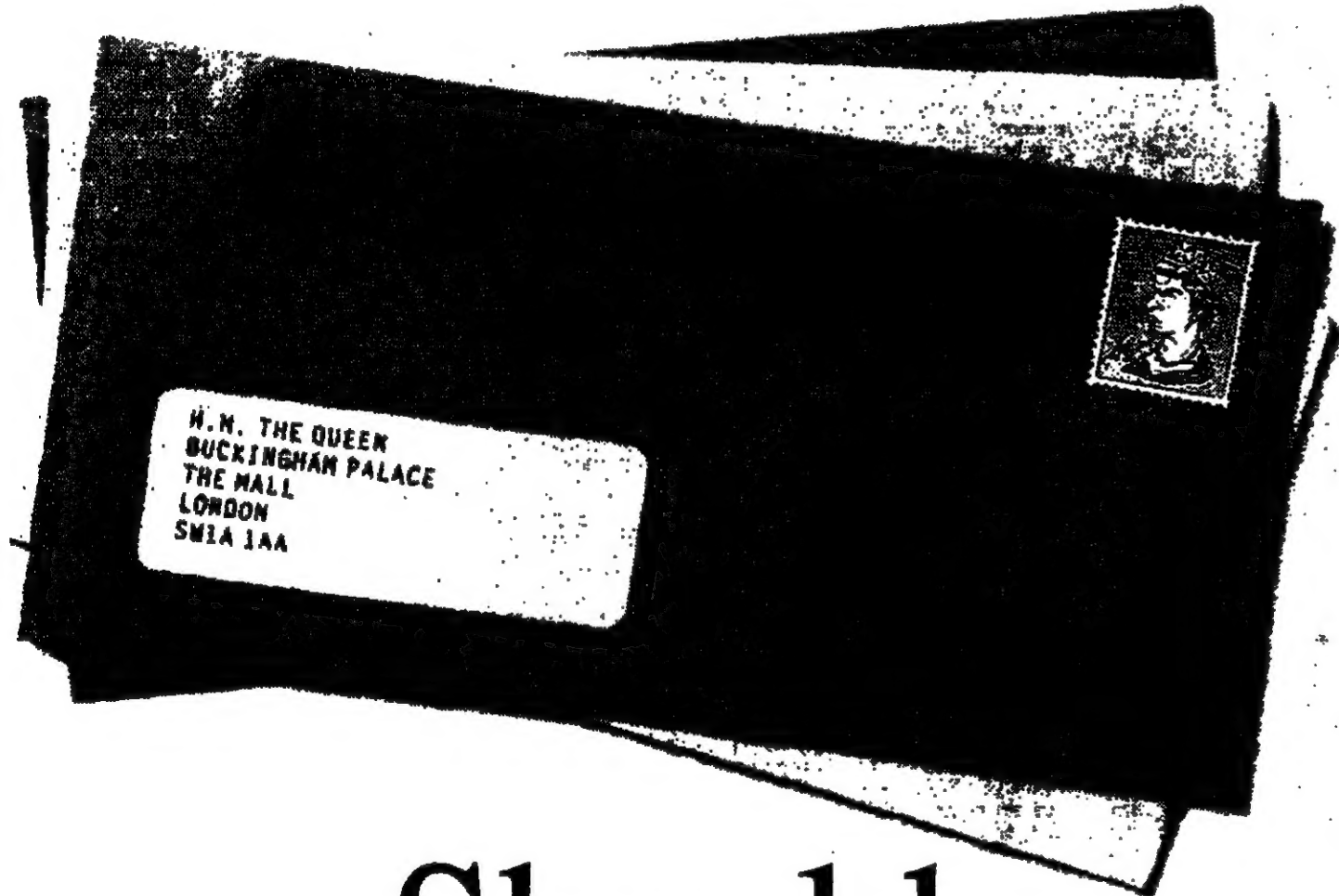
"Were you taken back when Tyson, a perfect stranger, kissed you on the lips?" she was asked by the defence. Ms Washington

replied: "No." The lawyer went on: "That gave you no kind of signal about what Mr Tyson was thinking about?"

"No. He wasn't dirty or mean or anything like that," she said.

During questioning by the prosecution on Thursday, she spoke of her high school achievements, travels to the Soviet Union, a student legislature bill she drafted on date rape — and of the night she claimed ended in a brutal attack. She said that Tyson pinned her to the bed, stripped her and raped her, ignoring her cries of pain. "I said, 'Please, stop! You're hurting me! Please, stop!' And he started laughing like it was a game," she said.

Tyson is charged with rape, confinement and criminal deviate conduct in the alleged attack.



Should we demand the Queen pay tax?

Queen Victoria paid tax. So did George V, and George VI.

But, because of a little-known case of a rural police station, the Queen does not.

In this week's Sunday Times, Phillip Hall, the veteran royal biographer, provides the most detailed account yet of the monarchy's wealth, its tax history, and the current state of the royal household.

One should read it this Sunday.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Europe's

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As Britain's...
anyone else...
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Argentina asks for Europe's overflow

THE European Commission is considering plans to help hundreds of thousands of East European workers settle in Latin America, in an attempt to ease immigration pressure within the Community as economic dislocation spreads across the former eastern bloc.

The underpopulated Latin American countries are keen to take some of the overflow, but they are demanding EC funding of up to £20,000 for each immigrant. Argentina and Uruguay have already submitted proposals to the Commission, and President Menem of Argentina will discuss the issue with Jacques Delors, the president of the Commission, and the European Parliament when he visits Brussels and Strasbourg in two weeks' time.

The Commission finds the plan attractive because it could help diffuse racial tension in the Community, as East European immigration threatens to aggravate the rise of neo-fascist parties, which are already enjoying widespread support in Germany, France and Belgium. The £20,000 demand is based on the amount America paid in recent years to help settle each Soviet Jew in Israel.

The Commission has set up specialist units in Brussels to draft proposals for the mass migration, and Abel Matutes, the Latin American relations commissioner, has been promoting the project since before Christmas. Commission sources say that Mr Delors is willing to discuss the proposal seriously with President Menem.

Argentina is the keenest of the countries to welcome immigrants because it has a slow birth rate and is coming out of recession. It could take as many as 100,000 East European workers over the next five years, whom it would try to settle in remote regions such as the Patagonian pampas. The Argentine government would want EC help to set up businesses for the East Europeans, but officials said that the £20,000 figure was misleading and they may not need so much money.

Diego Guelar, the Argentine ambassador to the EC, said yesterday: "The problem at the moment for the Community is the North African

The EC is considering a plan to send Eastern European immigrants to warmer climates, writes Tom Walker

immigrant population and the rise of rightist parties, and this has helped to hide the East European issue. But this will become the central problem in the future, and the EC will need a menu of solutions. Ours is a good one."

The ambassador is a fourth-generation Romanian. "Argentina has always supported this sort of immigration," he said. One million East Europeans, many of them Jews, emigrated there before and after the two world wars.

The Commission has also received approaches about immigrants from Chile, Paraguay and Venezuela. Reports from Caracas, the Venezuelan capital, said last week that

the government may send teams to Eastern Europe to target the workers it needs most. A spokesman for Señor Mantas said all the countries were looking for "middle-ranking workers who are technically skilled" and that the process would be "very selective".

An Argentine delegate to the Community said his government had already identified Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania as potentially fruitful countries for recruitment. "We're looking at minority populations with uncertain futures," he said.

The looming EC immigration problem has been highlighted by a new Commission survey of attitudes in central and Eastern Europe, which found that 8 per cent of those polled wished either "probably" or "definitely" to go to Western Europe. If such a move took place, the EC would have to cope with an influx of 13 million people.



Travelling hopefully: Albanian girls line up for the country's first beauty contest. First prize is a European holiday

Lipsticks and lyrics beat the Treasury forecasters

By JAMIE DEITMER

SINCE 1989 there has been a theory that recessions and booms can be predicted by two key economic indices — pop songs and lipstick. Months before the current recession a social psychiatrist from Columbia University and the chairman of the New York store Bloomingdale's knew exactly what was around the corner.

Harold Zillow, a research fellow at Columbia University could see a slump looming through the lyrics of the top 100 songs of 1989. Marvin Taub, the chairman of Bloomingdale's, told a prime-time television audience that he was convinced a long downturn was on its way because the store's lipstick sales were rising rapidly. Lipstick is inexpensive but still makes women feel good.

The bad news is that neither Mr Zillow nor the Bloomingdale's chairman can see an end to the recession.

Mr Zillow and a research team analysed popular songs since the second world war and found that a year or two

before recessions started lyrics became pessimistic and that a year or two before an upturn came songwriters turned out upbeat words.

"The outlook in songs and other popular culture may be contagious, reinforcing cheer or gloom in people," Mr Zillow said. "The songs may spread pessimism."

In all Mr Zillow and his team analysed 1,344 songs. In 1989, he found the Young Cannibals' song "Good Thing" ruminated about something bad. George Michael's "Praying for Time" was equally gloomy, with



Michael Zillow: gloomily praying for time

lines like, "It's hard to love, there's so much to hate, hanging on to hope."

As the hit songs of 1989 and early 1990 continued in their gloomy vein, most of the American economic pundits were saying that the economy would expand well into 1993. Is there light at the end of the tunnel now?

Mr Zillow says the optimism level of songs is still weak. Lipstick sales are also high. In Britain, there were a few bright sparks who also believed a recession was on its way before it was apparent to many in the City. At the press relations firm Ogilvy and Mather, now called Ogilvy, Adams and Reinhardt, account executives noticed in the late eighties the sudden appearance of new magazines devoted to traditional furnishings. The magazines' theme was nesting and they seemed to urge readers to hibernate. These magazines are still doing well.

Where does this leave the Treasury? Maybe Whitehall should forget M0 and M1 and just keep listening to U2.

Marking a close encounter

Livingston: The world's first monument to a UFO visit was unveiled yesterday on a Scottish hillside. The 30ft spaceship reportedly hovered and released two silver balls which overpowered a forestry worker and tore off his clothes in a cloud of foul smoke. Livingston Development Corporation marked the episode with a plaque at Dechmont Law, West Lothian.

Easing up
Tokyo: The average Japanese put in 2,016 hours at work in 1991, down two per cent from the previous year. The American average was 1,957.

Worn out
Nicosia: Two Lebanese were sentenced to jail for smuggling heroin they had soaked into their clothes. (AFP)

Long wait
Stockholm: Archaeologist Roger Bidmo, caught in a traffic jam, realised that road improvement excavations had uncovered a 2,500 years old village. (AP)

Cutting back on the bridegroom's suit

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE average cost of a wedding is now £9,444, eight per cent more than a year ago, according to a survey carried out by *You and Your Wedding Magazine*. The survey asked 1,426 brides-to-be how much their families were planning to spend on the nuptials, and found that for 24 out of 28 listed items the brides estimated that they would be spending more than those who married a year ago.

The four items of expenditure on which small economies were envisaged were the bridegroom's suit, bride's bouquet and, mindful of price reductions at Rainers no doubt, both wedding rings.

On the other hand, estimates for the cost of pageboys' outfits, the reception venue or marquee hire, the drinks bill and the first night hotel were up by more than a fifth, and the brides foresaw expenditure increased by almost a fifth to commit their happy day to video.

The estimates varied widely from bride to bride. One woman entered the intended

cost of the honeymoon she had planned as £2, while the most ambitious believed that £5,000 was to be lavished on her first holiday as a married woman.

While some reception venues were entered as costing no more than £5, others were up to £14,000. Catering bills were expected to total anything from £50 to £6,000.

Costs were more sharply increased in the south (up by 11 per cent to an average £10,526) than the Midlands (up six per cent to £8,086) and the north (up 4.5 per cent to £8,462), though reception venues were expected to be more than a fifth cheaper in the south than the north.

The Caribbean overlook the United Kingdom and Channel Islands as the most popular honeymoon destination. Seven eighths of the brides said they planned to wear a traditional wedding dress. Fewer than half the weddings were to be paid for by the bride's father.

You and Your Wedding, Spring 1992, £2.50.

My kind of town says Muti

Ricardo Muti, who is leaving the Philadelphia Orchestra after 12 years as music director, showed mixed feelings about the city at a farewell dinner. He criticised its fascination with personality: "You talk about my lack of smile, the cold fish, the hair, my shampoos". But he added: "I love Philadelphia. I gave it the best years of my life. I'm going back to Europe in June." He is returning to Italy as music director of La Scala.

Former National Security Council aide Oliver North wants continued permission to carry a concealed weapon because of death threats from Middle East terrorists. In papers filed in Virginia, North said the terrorist Abu Nidal targeted him for assassination in April 1986. North is now president of Guardian Technologies, a bullet-proof-vest manufacturer.

The recession has claimed another victim — the 70's Eurovision song contest star Clodagh Rogers. Her hit song *The Party's Over* rings true in Farnham, Devon, where the bank has put Clodagh's Wine Bar on the market at £110,000.

The Italian embassy in Tokyo has suspended former cabinet minister Fumio Abe, aged 69, as honorary consul following his arrest for alleged bribery. Abe, confidant of prime minister Kiichi Miyasawa, was arrested on suspicion of taking bribes as head of the Hokkaido Development Agency.

Mother Teresa's doctors say the 81-year-old missionary appears to be thriving in her recovery from pneumonia and related cardiac problems. She underwent a treadmill exercise in San Diego, California, to test the strength of her cardiovascular system and hopes to leave for Rome on Sunday for a meeting with Pope John Paul II.

No-one takes off more.

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Give the Scots their money

Their own currency would mean freedom, Nicholas Ridley says

The poll published on Tuesday in *The Scotsman* showed that 50% of Scots now want independence and only 27% want devolution. While a single poll must not be taken too seriously, it will come as a blow to all three main political parties. The Labour party and the Liberal Democrats have been trying to buy off Scottish opinion with talk of devolution, which in my opinion is a pointless exercise because it does not offer a solution to the Scottish problem. The Tories have been right to reject devolution, and to face the Scots with the alternatives of status quo or independence, never thinking they would choose the latter. Unfortunately, if forced to choose, the Scots are clearly moving heavily towards independence, the reverse of the expected.

It is hard for Englishmen to comprehend exactly what are the reasons for Scottish discontent. They dislike being run from England; they want to decide things for themselves. Their economy is always that bit behind the English one — wages tend to be lower, and unemployment higher. They seem to feel the English both make them poor and treat them as poor relations.

There is little to be gained from labouring the arguments on the other side. Some £2.5 billion is transferred from England to Scotland every year; the Scots standard of living is among the highest in the United Kingdom; their public services are more lavish than those of the English. The English think Scotland benefits from the Union; but these arguments cut no ice north of the border.

Scotland is a classic example of what happens when there is a single currency between two unequal partners. Scotland is unlikely ever to be as prosperous as the south east of England — its costs are higher, its distances from the centre are greater, and it is much more sparsely populated. So the Scottish economy can never quite keep up with the English pound.

In order to bridge the gap, grants of £2.5 billion are paid annually to Scotland from the exchequer. These grants are seen as both patronising and inadequate by the Scots; at the same time they are a source of irritation to the English. The mood of alienation sets in; the Scottish people's thoughts turn to separation. "Devolution" is put forward as a compromise but ultimately it cannot satisfy either side, as it is so often the case with compromises. The Labour party desperately wants devolution to stick as a solution — or else they lose 50 Scottish seats at Westminster.

The answer, if answer there has to be, is to give Scotland its own currency. The Scottish pound, once floated, would find a level of acceptance in the English pound at which the Scots would price themselves into their markets; they would then regain full employment, and

their political grievance would evaporate. There would be no more need for grants from England, or anywhere else. Being an inventive, hard-working and enterprising people at heart they might even prosper enough to overtake the English standard of living. Freedom of movement of capital, labour and goods and services would remain all essential ingredients for economic success. They are all enshrined in the Treaty of Rome.

It is curious that the Scottish National Party has never put forward the idea of ending the single currency between England and Scotland. In truth, it gives them all the essentials of what they want, without all the messy arrangements that follow from trying to settle the problem politically rather than economically.

Indeed the SNP compounds its folly by advocating an independent Scotland, which would be a member of the European single currency. Thus they would have the trappings of independence, while ensuring that Scotland was dependent on Brussels, through having to maintain its currency at a certain arbitrary parity. They would only escape from the domination of the English pound in order to find their economy dominated by the Deutschmark. Like the English, the Scots are offering to put the value of their currency above their own national interests.

Thus, what the Scottish Nationalist Party is arguing for does not produce the results its members want.

I realise, of course, the consequences of giving Scotland the management of its own currency. It would need its own central bank, and its own finance minister, and its own budget. Political accountability would require that it had its own parliament — to which the finance minister would be accountable. In effect, it gives Scotland a high degree of independence.

There are many arguments against a Scottish currency. It breaks up the Union — and Tories insist that they belong to the Conservative and Unionist party. Scotland is a small country; some would say too small to run its own currency. Yet Finland, Ireland and Iceland are all examples of small countries that do. Perhaps the extent of the change involved makes it an enormous undertaking. I merely offer the idea to Tories who wish to be rid of the English subsidies to Scotland, and the ungrateful electoral response that they get from them.

The last point to make is that this whole subject points up the lack of wisdom of Britain getting involved in a single European currency. If we cannot make the English and Scottish single currency work without alienation and tension, how can we contemplate locking ourselves into a similar lock with Germany? It is a perfect example of the evils that flow from imposing a single currency on diverging economies.

Charles Bremner on America's prurient fascination with televised scandal

Values of the voyeur

Imagine the Queen opening her speech to Parliament with a couple of jokes about her digestion, professionally crafted by a television gag writer. Imagine then that a sizeable number of citizens watched the address on a channel that mocked her and feasted on the screen around her with satirical clips from newsreels. Such was the carnival atmosphere that surrounded Mr Bush's appearance before Congress to pronounce on the State of the Union this week.

Yes, the president is a politician, but there was something extraordinarily jarring about his jokes and the live broadcast of his speech by the 24-hour Comedy Channel, complete with commentary from a team of experts, including a manicurist, a psychic and a gastro-enterologist. The production was a good measure of America's ever-growing urge to turn everything into vicarious entertainment.

The titillation of recent days has come thick and fast. Viewers could watch, for example, Jeffrey Dahmer, America's latest television star and a confessed serial killer who ate his victims, enjoying a little chuckle as his lawyers waved a newspaper headline in the courtroom: "Milwaukee Cannibal Eats His Cellmate". The lawyer was trying to convince a court of Dahmer's insanity.

So much seamy, lurid and grisly reality has come to entertain the populace in recent weeks that the steamy fictions can hardly compete with the facts. Mr Dahmer's trial, held in one of the 40 states which allows cameras in court, is being broadcast live by Court TV, the new network that hit the big time with the Kennedy-Smith trial

in Palm Beach. A channel change took viewers to the Florida court in which a jury decided to send Aileen Wuornos, the "Damsel of Death" who was convicted of doing away with six men, to the electric chair. For sex and vengeance in the suburbs, New York is offering the trial of Carolyn Warmus, a school-teacher accused of murdering her lover's wife. In Indianapolis, the stage is set for a ramble through the sexual escapades of Mike Tyson, though the show value is severely diminished by a local ban on televising trials. For lighter relief next week, a Texas civil court will dredge through the lesbian life of Martina Navratilova.

Accompanying this judicial theatre, a genre which exploded with

the Clarence Thomas hearings last October, is the Bill and Hillary Clinton show, a soap opera in many parts. In the latest episode, Governor Mario Cuomo of New York grudgingly accepted Governor Bill Clinton's apology for calling him a "mean son-of-a-bitch" and a "mafioso" in a private telephone call to Jennifer Flowers, his putative paramour.

The feast of shock sound bites and sex-laden video-clips is upsetting some older Americans. "I'm worried about it," President Bush said the other day. "Worried about so much filth and indecent material coming through the airwaves and into people's homes". A Washington Post commentary called the Clintons' show "the latest step in the degradation of

democracy by televised image-making." All kinds of theories are being offered to explain the collective lurch towards voyeurism. The *Chicago Tribune* likened the mood to the gleeful enthusiasm of spectators at a car crash.

The marriage of intrusive new technology and a shift in the moral tide has created a belief in the public's right to know, relish and pronounce on everything instantly. The permissiveness of the 1960s and 1970s has fused with television and the old American puritan instinct to produce a toxic wave of hypocrisy. With no moral framework to impose limits but a general mood of prurient censoriousness prevailing, the natural result is an orgy of ogling.

Future historians, the *Chicago Tribune* observed this week, will write that "the Americans of the 1990s rediscovered the judgmental attitudes commonly associated with the era of the British Queen Victoria".

A point for the amateur

David Lipsey warns that a ban on fox-hunting will damage point-to-pointing

Forget Royal Ascot, a fashion parade for toffs. Stiff Cheltenham, a booze-up and bet-in for the population of the Emerald Isle. For the essence of racing, neither can touch the humble point-to-point. The season is due to open at Tweseldown near Aldershot, Hampshire, today, and wends its way through the villages and farms of old England to its conclusion at Torrington Farmers at Umberleigh, Devon, in June. This is amateur sport at its best. Jockeys are unpaid, stewards local, the organisation is voluntary and the facilities are invariably rudimentary. Maximum prize money for a winner is £250, lower in real terms than it was in 1884. Even the bookmakers are often amateurs, on occasion offering odds that would enable the canny punter to back every horse in the race and still win.

The imperfections that go with amateurism give point-to-point its character. Form-books for professional meetings do not include the abbreviation "RFO", used in the point-to-point bible, *MacKenzie and Selby's Hunter Chasers and Point-to-Pointers*, to signify "rider fell off". On a proper racecourse you would not expect an incident such as that at South Teccot, Devon, last year when a loose greyhound joined the race. MacKenzie and Selby award it "second place — open class", but say the owner should be warned off for letting it loose. In several races, the judge called the wrong winner.

Every meeting has its character. The mixed crowd that braves the frozen wind at Flagg Moor in the Peak District could not be more different from the Hooray Henrys swigging Mott by the magnum from the car boot who monopolise the May meeting at Peper Harow, Surrey. Farmers' meetings, military meetings, university meetings (for Oxford and Cambridge) are all different but all are part of the rural English tradition.

Yet this is not a tradition in decline. Pointing has never been



Under threat: Oldbury church, Gloucestershire, provides a traditional backdrop to a day's racing at a point-to-point meeting

more popular. A Jockey Club survey suggests that 400,000 people attend a point-to-point each year, and 25,000 have been reported at some bank holiday meetings. This year, 103 meetings are scheduled. All this is now under threat. No one, including the League against Cruel Sports, wants to ban pointing. But many people want to ban hunting. Kevin Macnamara's bill to outlaw hunting will have its second reading in the Commons this month. Last Wednesday's launch of a new pro-hunting campaign demonstrates the mounting concern among the men in pink coats that anti-hunting legislation is increasingly likely.

The present structure of point-to-point racing is intimately interwoven with that of hunting. Points are run by hunts to raise funds. Hunt do the organising, lend their names, and persuade farmers to allow their fields to be used as courses. If there were no hunting to sustain, those who now

organise points would lose part of their motivation. Such voluntary structures are not easily replaced.

The very rules of pointing are tied in with hunting. The definition of a horse eligible to run in a point-to-point is one that has a certificate signed by the master of the hunt to show that it has been "regularly and fairly hunted". Without this limit, race horses owned and trained by professionals would tend to steal the show. Race entry limits are largely defined by the nearby hunt.

Ending hunting would require a fundamental re-think. Many believe that its demise would mean pointing's demise too. Traditional though point-to-pointing is, it has shown a capacity to adjust to the times. Though now the epitome of Englishness, it appears to have originated in the United States: one of the first laws passed by Jamestown Council in Virginia was to "prohibit point-to-point

racing in the streets." The first English point was not held until 1790 or 1792, depending on which reference book you believe, when Sir Charles Meynell, Sir Gilbert Heathcote and Lord Forester raced each other over eight Leicestershire miles for a purse of 100 guineas a man. Point-to-pointing began as a race from one church steeple (or "point") to another. Now it is conducted on something more akin to a conventional steeplechase course. It began as a contest between hunters. Now, the vast majority of the equine participants are thoroughbreds, and it is cause for comment when even the best hunter finishes ahead of even the most ardent of thoroughbred jades. Some masters of foxhounds are notoriously willing to nod through any thoroughbred that turns up at a meeting.

If the hunting of live animals is barred, many hunts will go over to following an artificial scent. Drag-hound hunts following this practice already exist. They stage successful point-to-points: today's Tweseldown fixture is held by the Staff College and Royal Military Academy dragoon units. These are particularly enjoyed by those who take pleasure in pointing but dislike fox-hunting. So the abolition of hunting would be a setback for pointing, but not necessarily a terminal one. Whether it proved fatal would depend upon the foresight of those who enjoy it. They could bury their heads in the sands, hoping that the calls for abolition go away, but if they persist, pointing will wither away. Once courses are lost and organisations disappear, they will be rebuilt only slowly. Alternatively, while hoping for the best, pointers could plan for the worst. The Jockey Club, which regulates points, could sit down with the Point-to-Point Owners' Association and the Point-to-Point Secretaries Association to draw up fall-back plans. If they fail to do so, they will share the blame with the anti-hunting lobby.



...and moreover

PHILIP HOWARD

A pun my word, a pun is a pungent disappointment to many punters. It gets dismissed as a childish form of wordplay, particularly by those who can neither make puns nor understand them. The great and gloomy groan at puns. Addison put down the pun in *The Spectator* as false wit and a silly jingle. In *The Dunciad*, Pope ascribed to "a great critic" the view that, "He that would pun would pick a pocket." (Pope himself was, of course, a incorrigible punnister.)

And yet the pun has a long and eminent pedigree. The oracle at Delphi and other ancient forecasters and sibyls prophesied in puns: their riddling ambiguity made their predictions come out right, whatever happened. The Christian church is founded upon the rock of a pun. Hamlet came up with a pun in the most dire and depressing situations, from grave digging to murder. Just as there are at least seven kinds of ambiguity in poetry, there are puns echoing like squabbles bouncing off the back wall when Milton writes about Satan's rout or talks about a lapse.

More surprisingly, Dr Johnson enjoyed puns. You think of the 18th century, with its taste for classical order and rationality, being above such childish wordplay. Sam was talking about John Campbell, the talented contemporary hack, and mentioned that he had married a printer's devil. Reynolds: "A printer's devil, sir? Why, I thought a printer's devil was a

creature with a black face and in rags." Johnson: "Yes, sir. But I suppose he had her face washed, and put clean clothes on her." (Then looking very serious and very earnest.) "And she did not disgrace him — the woman had a bottom of good sense." Every-one tittered at the solemn pun on one bottom. Johnson, who hated being made a fool of, glowered around, and called out in a strong tone: "Where's the merriment?" Then searching for a still more ludicrous pun, he slowly pronounced: "I say the woman was fundamentally sensible," as if he had said, "hear this now, and laugh if you dare." "We all sat composed as at a funeral."

The pun is alive and well in its various manifestations, from the literary to the demotic art of graffiti and the double entendre of professor Frankie Howard. James Joyce lived by the pun, from his haunting tetralogy of authors, *Symphonic*, *Shakespeare*, *Sudodante*, *Anonymos*, suggesting corruption in the heart of beauty, to the hangings of Euston and the flapping garments of Marylebone, echoing the fleshpots of Babylon, and encapsulating the waste land of modern urban civilisation in a line.

Sub-editors writing headlines love puns, though some readers are irritated by them. Sitting all day in front of a computer screen, rewriting and cutting other people's copy, and fitting headlines into spaces that can take only an absurdly small number of letters, is demanding

and frustrating work. It is not surprising that we send up a little pun to show that we are men (or women), not machines, behind the screens. The trouble is that the puns are usually old. So, page 3 girls tend to be labelled breast of the bunch or breast of British: teachers are always getting caught when they are criticised, anything to do with lavatories brings a flush to somebody's face: Scots Nats buzz and hospital workers are in stitches. Sub-editors do give the impression that they are middle-aged schoolboys, obsessed with books and corporal punishment, who have not progressed from reading the *Beano*.

There was this sub-editor sitting in a pub, and a prostitute passed by on the prowl. "What are you drinking, big boy?" she asked. "Perrier," he said. So she passed on. And the sub said to his charm: "Abstinence makes the tart go yonder." The fun of a pun is being able to groan at it. But mock them not. The pun to poetry is close allied. It is a peculiar richness of English that it has such a huge word stock of Romance and Teutonic and Nordic and Celtic, with contributions from the languages of the empire, that words have layers of overlapping meaning. You can never be sure that anybody means quite what he says. This is one of the glories of Eng. Lit. The trouble with most of the puns in journalism is that we are only too dreadfully sure what they mean, because we have heard them all before.

Hollywood bowled

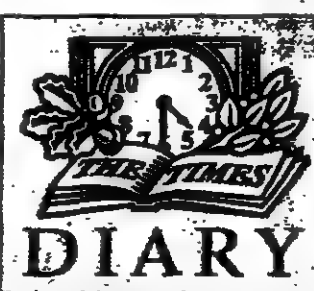
ANDRE Previn had his first job in Hollywood at the MGM studio lot in 1946 as a musical arranger. That experience of Hollywood's golden age gives him a rogue's gallery of anecdotes ranging from the legendary Louis B. Mayer, to Ava Gardner and Gene Kelly for his autobiography, *No Minor Chords*, published this month.

He recalls, as an 18-year-old, sitting on the back seat of Mayer's limousine, "totally out of his depth", on his way to play at a charity party at the palatial home of Douglas Fairbanks. Mayer asked: "Did any of you gentlemen go to the Hollywood Bowl last night?" referring to a remarkable concert by Jascha Heifetz. Mayer, never one to confess ignorance, enquired: "What was that weird thing he played? Do you happen to know the name of it?"

Previn was puzzled. He couldn't work out what it was that had seemed so strange. Heifetz had played the Sibelius violin concerto with his usual perfection. "I started to speak but Mr Meyer cut across my feeble attempt. 'No you can't possibly know, nobody has ever heard of that thing, he shouldn't play pieces no one has ever heard of. It's ridiculous. Anyway that is one of the reasons he is not a success'."

Previn revels in name dropping. The book's dedication is to his editor Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Her better judgment, he says, "was probably tempered by her enjoyment of slightly wicked stories."

Before the rugby showdown between England and Ireland at Twickenham today, British parliamentarians will do battle with their opposite numbers from the



Irish Dell at Richmond-upon-Thames rugby club. Tony MP Humphrey Malins, who played for Richmond, captains the British side. They will be hard pushed to beat the Irish team, which boasts two former internationals and Frank Fahy, the sports minister.

Write off

A RELATIVE of Dame Millicent Fawcett, the women's rights campaigner, has repaid the family's 75-year-old debt to Romania. As Dame Millicent, one of the suffragettes, was marching for the vote, her niece, Margaret, a medical auxiliary, went to Romania in 1916 to help the British allies.

While she was there she stole a cooking pot from an enemy house and brought it back to England. The theft came to light only when Margaret's daughter, Dr Audrey Cahill, of Natal University, came to Britain recently to research her mother's diaries.

She came across one entry, in a diary written by a colleague of her mother's, which said: "Fawcett and I had made up our minds to procure, even at a fabulous price, one of those jolly Romanian pots. The men were stealing everything, and we didn't want the Bulgars to get them." With that Dr Cahill sent a cheque to the Save the Children appeal for Romania.

Board comp

EVEN the "Monopoly" board has succumbed to moves towards closer European integration. Waddingtons is launching an EC version of the game this summer.

Park Lane will nestle alongside the likes of the Champs-Élysées. But to the horror of the anti-federalists the British addresses have been demoted to fourth place in the property pecking order. The premier dark blue square goes to Germany, the green to France, it

Swap you a hotel in Old Kent Rd; for the Bundesbank?



aly takes yellow while British addresses will occupy the humble red squares.

The traditional car and worn out boot, the usual mode of transport around the board, have been replaced with suitably European symbols such as the Eiffel Tower, the Brandenburg Gate, and the Tower of London.

Naturally, property bids will not be conducted in sterling. Contestants will use the ECU.

Miner classic

A YORKSHIRE coal mine is the last place you would expect to go to the opera. But English National Opera is sponsoring its first

production at a pithead, at Hickleton colliery near Doncaster.

The opera, with miners in the chorus, is being written by Karen Whimhurst, who has moved into the village for inspiration. It will mark the 50th anniversary of the Great Barnborough pit rescue, during which 70 miners who had been trapped underground for four days were saved.

David Beresford, a native of the village, who will film the opera, says: "One of the performers was part of the rescue team. He is now almost 70."

Whimhurst's last opera, *A Requiem to Lockerbie*, reduced many of the audience to tears at last year's Edinburgh festival.

Left turn

THE intellectual forces of the left are regrouping in a new research institute set up by Jenny Jeger.

Her mother, Lady Jeger, has been one of the Labour party's leading women figures for 40 years.

Jeger formed the group, Demos, with Martin Jacques, former editor of *Marxism Today*. It holds its first seminar next week at the Royal Geographical Society in conjunction with the Goethe Institute. Jeger says: "We will work with any political party except the Conservatives. There is a gap in the market." The group will hold its second public discussion later this month with a more unlikely bedfellow: the free market Institute of Economic Affairs, widely credited with creating the *Citizen's Charter*.

Sir John Wheeler, the chairman of the Commons home affairs select committee, must know something about the timing of the election that the rest of us do not. He is holding a reception to mark the end of the 1987 parliament on Wednesday, March 11.

FOOD FOR IN...

PRINCIPALLY



NEW LIFE FOR THE UN

The United Nations Security Council summit produced no surprises nor any document that went beyond the bland phrases acceptable to countries with widely differing interests. Yet it was still an important occasion, not just for being the first such summit, but because it raised issues that must be resolved if the UN's post-Gulf momentum is to be maintained.

The end of the Cold War has, for the first time since 1945, given the UN a chance to fulfil its raison d'être of peace-keeping and peace-making. To do so, it must be reinvigorated. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the new secretary general, has been asked to draw up a report on how his office can be better used to prevent conflict, alert the world to potential danger and speed up UN intervention.

He must avoid the supine passivity adopted by all his predecessors since the Congo civil war. He needs no new powers. He already has full authority to refer to the security council developments that threaten peace — but the power has been used only three times since 1945. In turn the military staff committee of the security council, no longer held hostage to Cold War rivalry, should begin to function as a hot line to the secretary general, as Mikhail Gorbachev suggested in 1987.

Peace-keeping must remain primarily the secretary general's responsibility. Operational control should not be returned to the 15 member countries because decisions on the financing and deployment of UN forces cannot easily be made by committee.

Peace-making is different. This demands a more active, pre-emptive diplomatic role for the UN, which until now has been sadly reluctant to do anything to prevent conflict. The UN must not just pick up the pieces afterwards. It must, as it is now preparing to do in Cambodia and Yugoslavia, remain in place even if one or other side withdraws its consent, and compel compliance with agreements even if this means shooting. Pre-emptive diplomacy does not need extra intelligence or a UN diplomatic service, only the active co-operation of member states.

FOOD FOR INVESTIGATION

Do British supermarkets cheat their customers? Are food prices kept high by monopoly practices? Or is competition too fierce to allow overpricing, as the food chains claim? Sir Bryan Carsberg, soon to be director general of the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), says he is tempted to investigate once he moves into his new job.

An investigation by *The Sunday Times* last year seemed to provide prima facie evidence that groceries in Britain were more expensive than in America and most European countries. The supermarket chains retaliated. Using another basis of calculation, they claimed British prices were in line with those abroad. Like most statistical arguments, this one cannot be resolved. What is clear is that British profit margins of 5-7 per cent dwarf the 2 per cent earned by most supermarkets on the Continent.

The supermarket chains say that in Britain, selling food is a capital-intensive business. Vast out-of-town superstores cost a lot to build: the big five, Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda, Safeway and Gaisway, spent over £2 billion on giant stores last year. To earn a return on that capital, they need to make profits. In the rest of Europe, by contrast, legislation on land use and opening hours is generally much more restrictive, to protect the small shopkeeper. Supermarkets tend to work from smaller, cheaper sites.

Companies such as Sainsbury and Tesco claim that the consumer has been well served by their expansion. Out-of-town stores are popular with shoppers: they stock such a huge range of products that a whole week's shopping can be done under one roof. People should be prepared to pay a little extra for that convenience — presumably whether or not they are offered a realistic choice.

Foreign companies are now moving to exploit the obvious opportunity, aiming at the profitable underbelly of Britain's big five groups. Discount chains such as Aldi from

Germany and Netto from Denmark are moving into Britain, charging prices for basic goods that are sometimes as much as 30 per cent lower than in the established supermarkets. Provided the market is working freely, this should be beneficial. A big Tesco store will stock 14,000-20,000 lines, compared with the 600 available at Netto. Customers who want more than a sliced white loaf and jar of instant coffee should expect to pay a convenience premium.

The accusation is that the market has been prevented from doing its job. Aldi has complained that the giants have put pressure on suppliers not to do business with it. Even a veiled threat would be effective: if a supplier were blacklisted by one of the big five, its profits would be seriously hit. Last year, the OFT published an inconclusive report on Aldi's complaint. It could find "no firm evidence" of anti-competitive behaviour.

However, Sir Gordon Borrie, the director general, acknowledged that suppliers could have been under pressure from supermarkets not to provide his office with the confirmation it needed. He also expressed concern about the concentration of grocery retailing and buying power. To this he might have added the leverage they exerted on the planning machine and on ministers to allow the rash of hypermarkets that despoiled the countryside in the 1980s.

The big five companies now control more than 60 per cent of food sales in Britain. If they use that power to put pressure on manufacturers to sell them food at the most competitive price, that is good for the consumer. If they use it to squeeze smaller competitors out of business, that is intolerable. Sir Bryan should seek to discover the truth. To suppliers who feel intimidated, he must guarantee confidentiality. There is more than a suspicion of supermarket sharp practice. If foreign competition does not clear the air then Sir Bryan must do so.

PRINCELY CANDOUR

When a public figure uses such words as soul, spirit, cosmos and God, the audience shifts nervously from foot to foot, looks embarrassed and mutters about a sad loosening of screws. When the public figure is the heir to the throne, the muttering grows to concern for the future of monarchy and the stability of the body politic. Yesterday Prince Charles looked an audience firmly in the eye and challenged it to mutter its worst.

He ruminated in public on why it was he had come to hold the decided views he does on nature, the environment and architecture. Why had he been immune to the "missionary zeal" of mechanistic postwar planning? Why had he disagreed with sweeping away anything that had outlived its physical usefulness? Why had he felt so strongly about architecture as to take the daring step of setting up an institute of architecture in his own name? Why did he court ridicule?

The answer, he said in a speech that was reportedly all his own, lay deep in his belief that for all the advances of science "there remains deep in the soul (if I dare use that word) a persistent and unconscious anxiety that something is missing, some ingredient that makes life worth living". This ingredient was present in the classical blend of matter and spirit. Architecture has always been the most concrete way of expressing this blend, but it must be "an architecture of the heart". That architecture, he said, must include "the delicate thread of wisdom that connects us with our forefathers" and "humility in how to observe nature".

Prince Charles is not particularly novel in his thoughts and often slides into cliché. He puts abstract nouns in a scatter-gun, and badly needs a court sub-editor. But as against the vapid, often incomprehensible prose of the profession he so often attacks, he is clear as a bell. His targets need no decoding. *Si hostes requirit, circumspice.* He will not let up. He invites controversy. But he is careful to avoid party politics and strives, usually successfully, to influence public taste rather than government policy. Prince Charles may sometimes push at the frontier of the constitution, but only the most fastidious purist could seriously object.

To be sure, a man whose status is rooted in heredity can afford to take risks, but all credit to him for doing so. Prince Charles is brave in lending his name and enthusiasm to an architecture school. Given the profession's internecine strife, this is like backing Montagues against Capulets. He is bravest of all in sharing with the nation forms of philosophical speculation that most public figures train themselves to avoid. To the bland world of vague manifestos, mission statements and risk-free interviews, the prince's phraseology is anathema.

Politicians, academics, journalists, even churchmen, have grown nervous of sentiment, ashamed of revealing the inner self that feeds the outer one. Few ask the questions even in private that Prince Charles asks in public. He reaches parts of the debate others dare not reach. His is a thoroughly refreshing intervention in contemporary affairs.

Museum needed for watercolours

From Dr F. K. Prochaska

Sir, As an American resident in London for over 20 years, it has long struck me as odd that there are so few English watercolours on display in the museums of London. This most national branch of art, in which the English are unsurpassed, rarely gets a look-in, apart from Constable and Turner, even in those institutions with glorious collections such as the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. (At present the V&A has a few on display together in a little room adjacent to the Constable collection.)

Problems of conservation must be considered, of course, but it is not a pity that the works of Constable and Turner are almost invariably tucked away in drawers, only to be seen by the determined collector or scholar?

How many people have seen the John Varley at the V&A? It has 83 of them. When did a member of the public last see one of the 26 Samuel Prouds at the British Museum? The brilliant special exhibition at the BM of British landscape watercolours was many years ago now.

Apart from the question of artistic deprivation which results from a lack of public access to such works, there has also been a detectable fossilisation of opinion about the English watercolour. This is reflected in the many books written about them which repeat the same rather commonplace views.

I am not a watercolour expert (nor a dealer or serious collector), but it seems to me likely that such views will persist without a gallery large enough to display a range of works and artists together, which allows the public to note the stylistic changes of individual artists, which offers to hang some of the little-known but magnificent pictures still in private collections, and which encourages the many contemporary exponents of this distinctive form of artistic expression.

In recent years London has seen a flowering of new galleries to celebrate one thing after another, from the omnibus to the moving image. Is it outlandish to suggest the establishment of a museum in the capital specifically dedicated to the English watercolour?

Yours etc.,
F. K. PROCHASKA,
9 Addison Bridge Place, W4.
January 29.

Gallery restriction

From Mr Wilf Weeks

Sir, I can assure Mrs Irene Rooney (letter, January 21) that the decision to suspend Sunday morning openings for the Friends of the Tate was not taken lightly. Sunday opening, despite extensive publicity, was taken up by only a small and dwindling number and it was increasingly difficult to justify the costs.

As an alternative the Friends have introduced an open evening on the last Thursday of each month, which has proved popular and well attended. When the Sunday closure was announced at last year's annual general meeting a commitment to review the decision was also made. The views of our membership will be fully taken into account.

Yours faithfully,
WILF WEEKS (Chairman),
Friends of the Tate Gallery,
Tate Gallery, Millbank, SW1.

Sullivan and Gilbert

From Mr Robert Handcastle

Sir, Next time Mr Woodward (letter, January 29) walks along the Embankment let him look at the south wall near Hungerford Bridge. There he will find a memorial to W. S. Gilbert, placed there "quietly and without ceremony" by a group of his friends in 1915.

It takes the form of a large medallion by Sir George Frampton, RA, among whose other works in London are the statues of Edith Cavell and of Peter Pan. The inscription, suggested by Anthony Hope, author of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, is no less relevant today than it was then: "His foe was folly, and his weapon wit."

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT HANDCASTLE,
Lawn Cottages, Camden Park,
Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
January 29.

Marked post-boxes

From Mr J. G. Riddall

Sir, I note that the Royal Mail post-box in our village, with its handsome scarlet and gold livery, has been defaced by having two yellow lines painted across the front of it.

I learn that the vandal responsible is the Post Office: the purpose of the disfigurement, in some regional trials, is to show that the box is emptied on Sundays. Could not some other way of imparting this information have been found?

Yours faithfully,
J. G. RIDDALL,
Hills View Cottage,
Far Hill, Bradwell,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
January 27.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Targets for teaching art and music

From the Chairman of the National Curriculum Council

Sir, Now that the secretary of state has supported the recommendations of the National Curriculum Council in the draft orders for art, music and physical education (report, January 28) I should like to comment on some of the points made by your correspondents (January 24).

NCC did in fact welcome the reports of the working groups on art and music as a major contribution to the cultural development of pupils as required by the Education Reform Act. It is true that we strengthened the requirements in knowledge and understanding to ensure that pupils appreciate both our diverse cultural heritage and a variety of other traditions. We felt, as the independent council set up to advise ministers, that it was important in a national curriculum that these areas are made explicit and not left implicit as in the working groups' reports.

This does not mean that our proposals are dominated by Western classical influences. In our view, children should understand their cultural heritage not only in terms of the classical tradition but also through to the present day. Certainly they should appreciate other traditions, but they should know the difference between the two.

We did not include any composers or artists by name in the proposed statutory requirements, contrary to the impression given by some press reports. We did include a number of examples intended to give teachers an indication of the range of major

figures which they could use in bringing the curriculum to life.

The other change we made was to propose a structure based on two rather than three attainment targets. We have drawn from experiences in other subjects in order to ensure that whilst retaining curriculum coherence, the proposals are as simple and practicable as possible, particularly for primary schools.

It is not our intention to separate musical and artistic education into practical and theoretical components. We have emphasised the integrated nature of the music and art curriculum as a whole and our proposals retain all the elements proposed by the working groups. I have repeatedly stated that we would expect teachers to give greater emphasis to practical aspects and that knowledge and understanding coupled with listening and appraising in music and visual literacy in art enhance and complement practical activities. I am pleased to see that the secretary of state supported this view in his comments.

The introduction of a national curriculum for art and music is a tremendously exciting development which will benefit all our children. I hope that these comments will reassure those who have expressed concerns about our proposals.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID PASCALL,
Chairman,
National Curriculum Council,
Albion Wharf, 25 Skeldergate, York.
January 28.

Laying claims to the origins of skiing

From Mr Hubert Fox

Sir, The first skis to be seen at Grindelwald in the Bernese Oberland were taken there by my father, Gerald Fox, and his cousin, Tom Fox (letters, January 27). Staying in Norway in February 1899, at a little hotel at Sandok on the Oslo Fjord, the two young men were fitted up with skis by the local carpenter.

Two years later, in 1891, they took the skis with them when they went to stay at Fritz Bow's Bear Hotel at Grindelwald. They had some difficulty passing through the Calais customs where officials suspected the skis to be infernal machines.

On the slopes above Grindelwald they persuaded the brothers Boss and two small Kaufmann boys to try them. Thirty-five years later, in 1924, Hans Kaufmann taught me to ski. My father's skis are now in the museum at Grindelwald. Tom Fox's are at the Schoeneegg Hotel there.

On the centenary of the 1891 visit, there were celebrations in Grindelwald and generous hospitality to members of the Fox family by the Stender family of the Schoeneegg Hotel.

Yours sincerely,
HUBERT FOX,
Langford, Buckfastleigh, Devon.

From the Chairman of the Ski Club of Great Britain

Sir, Mrs Jean Wynne (letter, January 27) quotes correctly from the obituary of her father, E. C. Richardson, in our yearbook of 1954, where he is described as the "father of British skiing"; but he did not bring skiing to Switzerland from Norway in 1891. There was skiing in Grindelwald (and other places) well before that and having seen it, Henry Lunn

took his first skiing party to Chamoin in 1896-9.

Nor was E. C. Richardson "the founder" of this club: it was founded by 13 individuals at a dinner at the Café Royal in 1903 (of which we still have the menu — there were ten courses). E. C. Richardson was, however, a prominent member of the group and was the first honorary secretary of the club.

Yours faithfully,
GILFRED DAY,
Chairman,
Ski Club of Great Britain,
118 Eaton Square, SW1.

From Dr G. Hattersley-Smith

Sir, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is credited with being the first Englishman to undertake a full day's journey on skis in Switzerland — in the Grindelwald area in March 1893, two years before E. C. Richardson was introduced to skis in Norway (*Strand Magazine*, vol. 8, 1894, p. 657-61).

Yours etc.,
G. HATTERSLEY-SMITH,
The Crossways, Cranbrook, Kent.

From Mr Freddie Whitelaw

Sir, Skiing was popularised by the publication of a book, *Paa Ski over Grønland*, by the explorer Nansen, an account of his 1888 crossing of Greenland on skis. Mathias Zdarsky of Austria is generally regarded as being the "father" of alpine skiing, for he it was who brought Norwegian skis in 1890 after reading Nansen's book, and took them to his home mountains. Zdarsky worked out how to turn, slow and stop, previously achieved more by good luck than management.

Yours faithfully,
FREDDIE WHITELAW,
27b Broom Road,
Teddington, Middlesex.

Milton Keynes lessons

From Professor David Lock

Sir, Those of us who have moved to Milton Keynes, as I did in 1978, have done so through choice (leading article, January 24; letters, January 30). There has been no compulsion, no coercion, and no incentives other than the town's promise of a good quality of life and its prospects for the future. We have been served well by an imaginative and humane development corporation which has not been "distasteful of the traditional British towns and cities" but has sought to extend that tradition to make a place fit for our children's children.

The "social engineering" at which you snipe has taken the form of immense care in achieving a wide choice of home and workplace, in nurturing social and cultural institutions that would ordinarily take several generations to grow, and in welcoming as broad a range of ages,

talents, disabilities and ethnic peoples as could possibly be contrived voluntarily.

The United Kingdom does not have the luxury of choosing between urban infill and new towns. Both are essential components of the strategic planning you wisely say we need. If the infilling of existing towns and cities was tackled with the same dedication and skill, and could similarly draw on the increase in land value, as have our new towns, then perhaps you would feel less angry about new towns in general, and could accept that in Milton Keynes in particular our generation has something of which it can be proud.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID LOCK,
(Managing Director),
David Lock Associates Ltd.
(Town planning urban design and development),
50 North 13th Street,
Central Milton Keynes,
Buckinghamshire.

Jews for Jesus

From the Chairman of Jews for Jesus

Sir, What a splendid contribution Mr Levin may have made to the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus in Britain ("Clodhoppers on crusade", January 27). Never mind that he quotes me out of context. Never mind that he tries to insult me — "Bacrian camel, vulgar oaf, spokesjew, rednosed reindeer, clodhopper". After all, he may be right.

It is certainly the case that an able copywriter would have penned a better advertisement for the Gospel and it is true that a more intelligent spokesperson would have found more insightful and sensitive responses to questions about Jews for Jesus. Never mind that he misspells my name — even without the final "e" no one will have any trouble recognising a vulgar, rednosed, oafish clodhopper of such gargantuan proportions.

This matters not a jot, for Mr

Levin, to his credit, has posed two important questions to British Christians: will we act on Jesus's call to evangelism — and will we act seriously on his plain statement in John's Gospel that "none shall come to the Father but by me"? If British Christians do so act, and God blesses our efforts, there will then be an abundance of deft, godly writers and spokespersons who will be able to communicate the thrilling news that Jesus is the saviour of Jew and gentile with the skill and sensitivity for which Mr Levin yearns. Perhaps Mr Levin himself will join us.

Then, to his great relief, there will be no need for clodhoppers like me, and I shall be able to return to some less conspicuous service for my glorious and forgiving Lord.

Yours faithfully,
MARK GREENE, Chairman,
Jews for Jesus, UK,
London Bible College,
Green Lane, Northwood, Middlesex.

Better provision for child care

From the Director of the Child Poverty Action Group and others

Sir, In the forthcoming Budget neither the possible extension of tax relief to all forms of help with child care from employers (report, January 24) nor the introduction of tax relief for child-care expenses (report, January 20) would help most of the families we work with and for.

The mothers in these families, if they are in employment, do not tend to work for the kind of employers who provide child-care subsidies. And often they do not earn enough to pay tax, so would get no benefit from tax relief.

What these families need is good-quality, low-cost child care, whether or not the parent(s) go out to work. Individual tax reliefs cannot guarantee either to increase or to improve child-care provision. More public investment could guarantee both.

We believe that child care should not be seen solely as a help to women in employment. Any Budget measures in this area should also, crucially, be judged on how well they meet the needs of children, especially those from low-income families.

Yours faithfully,
FRAN BENNETT, Director,
Child Poverty Action Group,
CHRISTOPHER BROWN
(Director, NSPCC),
ORIOLE GOLDSMITH
(UK Director, Save the Children Fund),
ADAH KAY
(Director, Family Service Unit),
JOHN REA PRICE (Director,
National Children's Bureau),
IAN SPARKS
(Director, The Children's Society),
Child Poverty Action Group,
4th floor, 1-5 Bath Street, EC1,
January 28.

Arabic and science

From Mr Muazzam Ali

Sir, Your report of "increasing pressure on Arab universities to teach all courses only in Arabic" (details, January 22). If the Chinese, Japanese, Russians, Italians, Spanish, French, Germans and many other nations of the world can impart education in science and technology in their own language, why should anyone be upset over the Arabs' desire to adopt their mother tongue for teaching?

It is true that until recently "scientific subjects in most of the 20 member-states of the Arab League were taught in English or French", but it was due to the fact that those states were under the colonial domination of Britain and France.

For the advancement of learning, whether in art or science, education must be imparted in the language of the people.

Yours faithfully,
MUAZZAM ALI (Chairman),
International Centre for
Islamic Studies,
ICIS House,
144-146 King's Cross Road, WC1,
January 22.

Tug of war plea

From Mr Brian M. Pitts

Sir, The Director of the Royal Tournament's plea for tug of war to be restored to the Olympic Games (letter, January 25) raises interesting points about its history.

Its inclusion in six Olympics, between 1900 and 1920, was not without controversy. According to the Olympic historian David Wallechinsky, the American tug of war team withdrew from the competition at the 1908 Games, in London, after being beaten by Liverpool Police, who were representing Britain.

The Americans claimed the police had cheated by using illegal footwear, complete with metal spikes and heels. But their protest was rejected by the judges, who accepted that the British bobbies had been wearing standard issue police boots, which could hardly have been unlawful.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN M. PITTS,
29 Priory Gardens, Highgate, N6,
January 25.

Moral climate

From Mr Philip White

Sir, Ms Christine Peach objects (letter, January 29) to your use of the word "fallen" to describe a young woman as it seems to her inappropriate "in today's moral climate". Surely she means "in today's immoral climate".

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP WHITE,
8 Stable Court, Welbeck,
Workson, Nottinghamshire.
January 30.

Preserving the past

From Mr R. F. Edward-Collins

Sir, Your photograph (January 28) of Lambley grade II* listed viaduct leads me to ask by what logic a structure which is of no further use has to be retained when, if it were not there already, its construction today would be opposed by I suspect, exactly the same people who now support its preservation?

Yours faithfully,
R. F. EDWARD-COLLINS,
Lanwithan, Looe, Cornwall.
January 28.

Weekend Money letters, page 24

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

Airlines balked at the cost of carrying extra water in tanks which could be used for fuel and which would mean heavy weight penalties at a time when they were struggling to make a profit as the

The draft proposal will now be discussed by the CAA, the FAA in America and the European Joint Aviation Authorities. A proposed notice of rule-making will be issued later this year and the final rule in mid-1993.

A map of the United States with a diagonal line running from the top left to the bottom right. The area to the left of the line is labeled 'SOUTH WEST 46%' and the area to the right is labeled 'WEST 49%'.



President Bush used his address to put pressure on Libya to surrender the Lockerbie bombing suspects, pointing to the concerned action over the Gulf. "Progress comes in acting in concert and we must deal resolutely with these renegade regimes — if necessary by sanctions or stronger measures — to compel them to observe international standards of behaviour," he said.

A resolution is expected to be put to the security council this month imposing sanctions on Libya.

Summit reports, page 8
Leading article, page 13

The Anglian region of the rivers authority, which stretches from the Humber to the

Southwest, where Abasco-
nair, in the southern up-
lands, enjoyed an extra inch
in a 48-hour cloudburst.

By PETER VICTOR

The workers receive a London weighting allowance of £1,750, which they claim is less than allowances paid to

doors but museums and galleries should be back to normal today.

President Bush used his address to put pressure on Libya to surrender the Lockerbie bombing suspects, pointing to the concerned action over the Gulf. "Progress comes in acting in concert and we must deal resolutely with these renegade regimes — if necessary by sanctions or stronger measures — to compel them to observe international standards of behaviour," he said.

A resolution is expected to be put to the security council this month imposing sanctions on Libya.



PARKER
DUOFOLD

A prize of a superb Parker Duofold International Fountain Pen, with an 18 carat gold nib and fully guaranteed for the lifetime of the original owner will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 456, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

The Canche crossword is

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SALE

Advisers
named by
MFI for
flotation

MONEY

Profile

Sir Bryan Carsberg, the Ofel director general, has no doubts about his ability to take on the biggest regulatory job of them all, director general at the Office of Fair Trading. Having cut his teeth by reining in British Telecom and making it more customer sensitive, he is enthusiastic about the challenges at the OFT... Page 19



Rate cut

Barclays yesterday became the second of the big four clearing banks to cut its mortgage rate for new borrowers. The rate is 10.99 per cent (an apt of 11.6 per cent). Comment... Page 21

Glamour fades

The tax-free "capital" element of annuity payments is to be cut from March 1, making annuities less attractive. But annuities are still a good way for older people to gain a fixed income. Page 22



Fighting back

Thousands of homeowners with short leases outside the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act, like Patricia Loder-Dyer, could stand to lose their homes and large sums of money spent improving them unless the government makes amendments to the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act. An announcement is expected this month but there could be delays with an election in the offing. This could force people out of homes they have lived in for years... Page 23



Breathing space

Halifax building society savers with small accounts who were expecting to pay charges from today now have longer to come to terms with the new regime than they were expecting Page 23

Value held

A new investment strategy by Scottish Life should mean people nearing retirement would not see a cut in the value of their pension if there was a sudden stock market fall... Page 22



Cover up

Motorists and householders are almost certain to see insurance premiums go up 20 per cent and some could see premiums double as insurers recoup huge losses in the past year... Page 21

Advisers named by MFI for flotation

BY OUR CITY STAFF

MFI, Britain's largest retailer of kitchens and bedrooms, is to float this year. The group has appointed County NatWest as its merchant bank adviser and Rowe & Pitman and Smith New Court Corporate Finance as joint stockbrokers.

MFI has yet to name the date but analysts believe a £750 million offer for sale is on the cards after the election, with July or October the preferred dates, depending on the state of the economy.

On that basis, 350 managers could share up to £112.5 million. Led by Derek Hunt, the chairman, they own about 15 per cent of the company. The flotation will also give a much-needed boost to Asda, the food retailer, which owns 25 per cent of MFI.

MFI took the decision to float this year after a narrow escape in the January sales exceeded expectations. The January sale is as important to MFI as Christmas is to other retailers and the sales figures for the month just ended are significantly higher than those for January last year. Gross margins have been maintained at planned levels, the group said.

MFI was a £715 million management buyout from Asda in October 1987 and the group expected to float with a market capitalisation of more than £1 billion in 1989.

Recession, however, coupled with the hike in interest rates, put the group's plans on hold. Debt was restructured and the organisation pared back. The group now has £500 million of debt and repayments escalate after 1993.

THE POUND

US dollar 1.7925 (+0.0085)
German mark 2.8779 (+0.0003)
Exchange index 90.9 (+0.1)

Bank of England official base rate (Apr)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 1996.6 (+23.0)
FT-SE 100 2571.2 (+20.4)
New York Dow Jones 3232.56 (-12.30)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 22023.05 (+455.38)

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base 10 1/4%
3-month interbank 10 1/4%
3-month eligible bills 9 1/2%
US: Prime rate 6 1/2%
Federal Funds 4 1/4%
3-month Treasury Bills 3 3/4-3.83%
30-year bonds 10 1/2-10 1/2 1/2

CURRENCIES

London: New York: £ \$1.7915
DM £2.8772
Sfr £2.5583
FF £1.7951
Yen £225.01
Index 90.9
ECU £0.710208
ECU £0.406238
London foreign market close

GOLD

London: AM \$354.15 pm \$354.10
close \$355.00-355.50 (2:18 00 198 50)
New York: Close \$355.75-356.25

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Feb) \$18.30 bid (\$18.35)

RETAIL PRICES

RPI 135.7 December (1987-100)
Denotes monthly trading price

Thorn pulls out of retailing at cost of £45m

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH

THORN EMI is withdrawing Rumbelows from electrical retailing, with the loss of 800 jobs and at a cost of about £45 million.

The loss-making business has been a costly mistake for the diversified electronics group and the news that it was withdrawing from the market sent its share price and that of rival electrical retailers higher.

Thorn shares rose 15p to 84 1/2p. Dixons, the market leader, which owns the Currys chain, saw its shares add 11p to 236p, while shares in its rival Kingfisher, owner of

the Comet chain, rose 6p to 53 1/2p.

Rumbelows, one of the largest specialist chains in the market, lost £16 million in the year to March 31, 1991, on sales of £283 million. The group has 500 shops and is well known among consumers but its position in a highly competitive market is weak. Thorn estimates Rumbelows' market share at 6 per cent but Verdict, the independent market research group, puts it at 3.9 per cent.

The 800 jobs that will go are among head office, support and service staff. The remaining 3,200 jobs are

likely to be subsumed by Thorn's rental businesses, Radio Rentals, DER and Multibroadcast, with 1,000 branches between them.

But as the group plans to rationalise the enlarged shop network over time it can give no guarantee on the eventual number of job losses.

The electricians' union, which represents most of the workers whose jobs will be cut, said it was "desperately disappointed" at the news. "Our members have done so much for this company, including accepting a pay freeze," said Dave Rogers, national officer of the EETPU.

Thorn plans to phase its withdrawal from electrical retailing and incorporate the Rumbelows shops into its rental business. The programme will start immediately and the group will devise new formats and packages for the rental market.

The Rumbelows name will survive for the time being and its sponsorship of the football Rumbelows Cup will continue. The group is unable to say what will happen eventually to the Rumbelows name.

Thorn EMI has been trying to sell the business for some time but a spokesman said it had not offered a price acceptable to the company. Despite its prime position on Britain's high streets, the chain was not profitable even during the boom of the mid-Eighties, according to the group.

Its diversification into out-of-town electrical retailing was too little, too late. It acquired the Atlantis chain of out-of-town stores in 1987 when it bought Vallances. The 40-strong Atlantis chain is likely to be sold to a competitor and the group says it has had expressions of interest.

Thorn is unable to say how much its involvement with Rumbelows has cost over the years but a provision of about £45 million for the costs of withdrawing from the market will appear as an extraordinary item in the accounts for the year to end-March 1992.

Mike Mearns, chief executive of Thorn EMI Rental, said: "Electrical retailing has seriously affected the group's profitability for a number of years and this has been accentuated by the recession. We have now dealt with the problem and simultaneously created the opportunity to broaden the consumer appeal of the UK rental business."

Lights go out, page 18

Closures to cut a further 1,158 British Coal jobs

BY ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Coal is to close its Bickershaw Colliery in Lancashire, and two mining equipment service centres, with the combined loss of 1,158 jobs. All the displaced workers will be offered employment elsewhere or enhanced redundancy terms.

The Bickershaw closure brings the number of deep mines closed by British Coal in this financial year to 13, leaving the corporation with just 50 collieries by its March year-end. Last week, British Coal announced the loss of more than 1,100 jobs at its Selby group of mines in Yorkshire.

However, British Coal also unveiled a reprieve yesterday for its Hatfield Colliery near Doncaster. The corporation said the future of the pit, which had been under review, would be secure if the present, improved levels of productivity were maintained.

The closure of the Bickershaw pit will cost the jobs of 620 miners. British Coal blamed mounting losses and a failure to meet production targets.

"Despite investment of £19 million, the complex has lost £35 million in the last six years, including over £11 million since April," stated the corporation.

British Coal said the losses had continued "despite the best efforts of the workforce". Terry Wheatley, director of

BC's Midlands and Wales Group, said the pit would close as soon as possible.

British Coal also announced plans to close two of its six mine service centres, which recover and maintain underground equipment. The Duckmanton Mine Service Centre, near Cheshire, with 380 employees, and the Swadlowgate centre, near Burton-on-Trent, which employs 158, will shut down.

Work will be transferred to the Bestwood centre 26 miles away near Nottingham, and to the Shafon Mine Service Centre, near Nottingham. Workers will be invited to commute to the new centres.

British Coal is closing mines and reducing costs because productivity gains mean fewer pits are needed to produce the same coal volumes, and because the electricity companies, its biggest customer, expect to increase imports of foreign coal when existing contracts expire in March 1993.

British Aerospace is to shed 200 jobs from the 1,200 workforce at its plant in Plymouth, which makes gun sights, weapons control systems and ships' compasses.

Granada Television is to cut 100 jobs in Manchester and London in an effort to reduce costs after successfully bidding £9 million to retain its franchise to broadcast to the North-West.

Clegg resigns from Wace

BY MARTIN WALLER

THE managing director of Wace Group, one of the biggest companies in the printing industry, has resigned abruptly, saying his departure best serves the interests of the company.

Wace earlier this week firmly denied rumours of any links with the IRA. John Clegg, aged 33, has also stood down as a part-time director of Anglo Irish Bank Corporation, a small Dublin-based bank.

The remaining directors of Wace, which has shown rapid growth since Mr Clegg took over the management in 1984, repeated an earlier statement that they were not aware of any links between the company, its investors or its directors, including Mr

Clegg, and "the IRA or any other terrorist organisation". The company says Mr Clegg was under no pressure to resign.

"Mr Clegg has decided that the interests of Wace would be best served by his resignation," a formal statement said. Mr Clegg was at the company's north London headquarters yesterday to tender his formal resignation.

He was expected to stay in contact. Despite being the managing director, Mr Clegg has no London residence and has lived in America and looked after the businesses there since last autumn.

Mr Clegg and his family took a 24 per cent stake in Wace in 1983, when the company was in financial trouble,

mainly using money supplied by a relative.

A report in a Sunday newspaper claimed that British police, aided by the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Irish Garda, were investigating a plot to use a British company quoted on the stock market to clean money through the City of London.

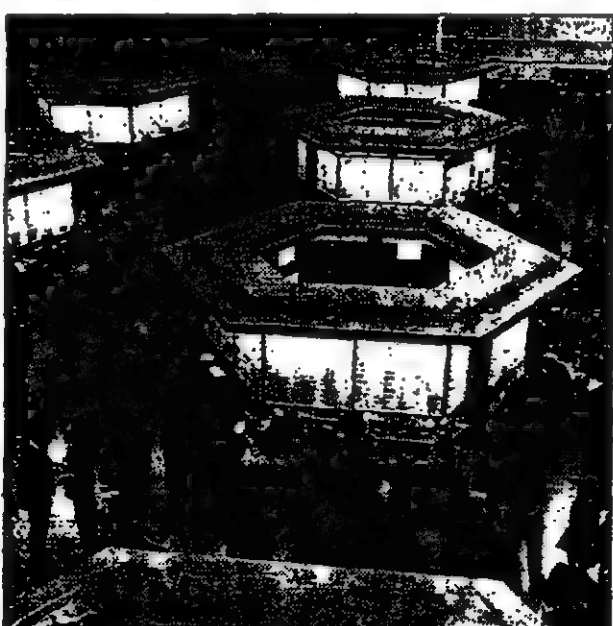
Wace was not mentioned in the article, but fast-spreading rumours in the City the next day prompted a fall in the share price and an immediate, categorical denial that the company had any links with the IRA. Mr Clegg's departure yesterday sparked an even sharper share price collapse, of 64p to 104p.

Mr Clegg's family holds 15 per cent of Anglo Irish Bank.

The bell tolls for SE trading floor



Final fling: options dealers mixed business with buffoonery in their final session on the floor



Past glory: the Exchange before Big Bang



Early days: Throgmorton Street in the 1830s

Dealers celebrate a long goodbye

BY JON ASHWORTH

THE Stock Exchange trading floor passed into City folklore yesterday in a shower of confetti and a roar of approval. No one tried to burn the place down, but the handful of dealers who have remained since Big Bang made sure they enjoyed themselves.

At exactly 4.20 pm, Bill Leask of Smith New Court and John Lee of James Capel, the two oldest hands on the floor, executed the last trade ever at Throgmorton Street. The London traded options market, which has kept a corner of the floor going since the switch to screen-based trading in 1986, reopens on Monday at Cannon Bridge, near the Thames.

Since May 1981, when the Stock Exchange was founded on its present site, jobbers and brokers have left the location only once—in 1970, when construction of the present floor began.

Before Big Bang, up to 1,500 traders packed the floor each day. About 200 options dealers remained after that, and now they, too, are moving on.

Trading on the floor was punctuated by raucous cheers as the options dealers, most of them in their early twenties, celebrated its passing in the manner they know best. Several unfortunates were caught out when pranksters slipped ink pads into their telephone earpieces.

Just after 4 pm, a bell rang and the scene dissolved in a cloud of paper. Beyond, you could just make out the international clock which has lined the walls for so many years. It was 0.10 am in Hong Kong, 2.10 am in Melbourne and 7.10 am in San Francisco. And in London it was time to go.

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Shake-up costs push IBM UK to £124m loss

By Ross TIEHAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

IBM UK lost £124 million before tax in 1991, despite revenues of almost £4 billion. The year saw Nick Temple, the company's new-broom chief executive, carry through the most thorough restructuring since IBM came to Britain 40 years ago.

The loss was caused entirely by £184 million of restructuring costs, largely for pay-offs to staff as the headcount was trimmed by 15 per cent

to 14,909. IBM, which has a long-standing policy of avoiding compulsory redundancies, persuaded 2,639 staff to leave with payments that often topped £50,000.

Job cuts are the most obvious symptom of a far-reaching transformation. Mr Temple believes the UK is the most competitive and, in terms of trends, the most advanced computer market in the world. He has reshaped the company to meet challenges that he believes will become global. The experience of IBM UK as a potential guinea pig for other IBM subsidiaries is being monitored.

Two strategic shifts are well advanced. Layers of management have been stripped out. IBM UK has been reorganised into more than 20 subsidiaries, each with its own financial controls. Many support functions, such as property management and supplies, have been spun off to their managers.

Mr Temple reckons 70 per cent of employees deal directly with customers, against only 45 per cent a year ago. IBM UK has accelerated its drive to increase revenues from software and services, redeploying 1,000 staff into those areas. Three years ago, sales of hardware accounted for three quarters of revenues. Last year, that had fallen to 62 per cent.

The company's revenues in the year to December 31 declined by 8 per cent to £3.98 billion. Revenues from the UK fell by 14 per cent, to £1.98 billion, while exports contracted 3 per cent to £2.28 billion.

Production of personal computers at IBM's Greenock plant in Scotland increased by 500,000 to 1.5 million.

Competitive pressures in both home and overseas markets hit profit margins hard. In 1990, IBM UK made an operating profit of £420 million; last year the figure was £60 million.

Mr Temple said the decline in the UK market appeared to halt in the final quarter of 1991, since when sales have been flat. He is confident that the restructuring, now likely to be completed by the middle of this year, 18 months ahead of schedule, will enable IBM UK to return to healthy profits in 1992. He does not, however, expect the market to grow significantly in the next two years.

The parent company recently announced a \$2.8 billion loss on sales of \$64.8 billion and the first fall in turnover since the second world war.

Jobs go at Maxwell offshoot

Price Waterhouse, the administrator to Maxwell Communication Corporation, has dismissed 36 staff at Macdonald, the subsidiary loss-making book publisher, as it prepares to sell the company.

News Ltd chief

The News Corporation, the international media group that owns *The Times*, has appointed Ken Cowley to be chairman of News Limited, its chief Australian subsidiary. Mr Cowley, aged 57, who has been chief executive of News Limited since 1980 and is a director of News Corp., will also become chairman of The South China Morning Post in Hong Kong.

Rupert Murdoch, News Corp's chairman and chief executive, said Mr Cowley was succeeding Richard Searby, QC, who had retired as a director of the company and most of its subsidiaries.

Heavtree dips

Heavtree Brewery reports annual pre-tax profits of £910,000 (£1.03 million). The total is 3.05p (same), not including the bicentenary dividend of 1p in 1990.

Booker buys

Booker has acquired the assets of Ross Young's wholesale catering depots for about £10 million.

Elliott omits

B Elliott is passing its interim dividend (1.25p). Interim pre-tax profits were £450,000 (£3.33 million).

Flextech rises

Flextech's interim pre-tax profits rose 23 per cent to £3.85 million.

Loss for Kelt

Kelt Energy made an interim pre-tax loss of £4.13 million (profit of £6.89 million).



Ray of light in sales: Dennis Rose, chairman of Wholesale Fittings, who says turnover is improving

Wholesale Fittings holds payout

WHOLESALE Fittings, the electrical distributor, is holding its interim dividend at 3.23p a share, despite a 51.8 per cent fall in pre-tax profits from £2.5 million to £1.21 million in the six months to October 25, on turnover 7.5 per cent lower at £30 million. Earnings slipped from 11.5p to 5.6p (Philip Pangalos writes).

David Fitchett, finance director, admitted that margins were under pressure, but stressed that they were "being maintained at acceptable levels". Dennis Rose, the chairman, said turnover for the first two months of the second half showed a slight increase over the corresponding period last year. After the opening of 14 depots over the past two years, the group now trades from 50 locations.

Competitive pressures in both home and overseas markets hit profit margins hard. In 1990, IBM UK made an operating profit of £420 million; last year the figure was £60 million.

BAe agrees to sell Aerostructures

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Aerospace has reached outline agreement to sell its Aerostructures Hamble business to a management-led consortium for £47 million.

Aerostructures, which employs 1,800 people making canopies and other aircraft components, is the first of several disposals flagged at the time of BAE's disastrous £432 million rights issue.

BAe is in advanced discussions with Marconi Matra of France and other potential partners, with a view to trans-

Allied-Lyons' pubs deal in disarray after OFT ruling

By OUR CITY STAFF

PLANS by Allied-Lyons, the drinks, foods and retailing group, to dispose of 734 pubs by leasing them to Brent Walker, the troubled leisure combine, have been thrown into disarray by a ruling from the Office of Fair Trading.

The deal, which also required Brent Walker to take a large proportion of its beer from Allied's brewing operations, has been formally cleared by Peter Lilley, the trade secretary, in accordance with a recommendation from the Office of Fair Trading.

But it is understood that the OFT insists that the deal does not count as a reduction in its tied estate, because the pubs are leased to Brent Walker

and Allied retains a property interest, and because of the beer supply agreement.

Allied, like most big brewers, is trying to reduce its tied estate before the November 1992 deadline set by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The MMC, in a wide-ranging report on the beer industry, has set tight restrictions on the number of pubs companies can hold tied to a supply agreement.

Had the pubs been sold outright, the deal would have caused no problems with the OFT. But Brent Walker, burdened with debt and in the throes of financial restructuring, does not have the money.

Allied was apparently surprised by the OFT's tough

stance, although the terms of the deal had been criticised in the licensed trade and the press as being an attempt to circumvent the spirit of the MMC's restructuring plans for the industry, the so-called beer orders.

John Brackenbury, head of Brent Walker's pubs division, said the deal would proceed. Allied said the deal would go ahead, although its legal advisers had said that the OFT's ruling on whether the pubs would continue to be tied under Brent Walker's control was wrong.

If that view is proved incorrect, Allied still believes it has sufficient leeway within the terms of the agreement to fall in line with the OFT's stance.

BAe agrees to sell Aerostructures

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

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BAe is in advanced discussions with Marconi Matra of France and other potential partners, with a view to trans-

ferring its Space and Communications businesses at Stevenage, Hertfordshire, and Bristol, Avon, into joint ventures.

Executives from BAE, Britain's largest manufacturing company, are also pursuing talks with other plane-builders over collaboration on future regional aircraft projects. The aim is to reduce over-capacity in the manufacture of regional aircraft worldwide and to rebuild the profitability of the activity.

A spokesman for Legal and General Ventures, which is co-ordinating institutional funding on behalf of management, said it was too early to detail the consortium's plans. He said finance would be provided by a group of institutions and banks.

Aerostructures makes canopies for civil and military aircraft, elastomer mouldings, and aircraft sub-assemblies. Principal customers include British Aerospace, McDonnell Douglas of the United States, and Saab of Sweden.

BAe decided to dispose of the business because its aviation strategy is to concentrate on being an aircraft assembler, withdrawing from peripheral activities, including component manufacture.

Owen & Robinson suffers in price war

By MARTIN WALLER

VICIOUS Christmas price-cutting by Gerald Ramer's retail group has caused a profits dive, a warning of full-year losses and a dropped final dividend at Owen & Robinson, one of the two surviving jewellers chains.

The shares collapsed from 25p to just 9p as the market expressed shock at the statement and the severity of the group's problems. In May last year Owen & Robinson raised £9 million in a one-for-one cash call.

The group says it is still operating within existing bank facilities but will shortly meet bankers for a scheduled review. Borrowings are thought to be in excess of £5 million.

Owen & Robinson, which has 60 stores mainly in the north, has been badly hit by Ramer's price pledges.

The group said second-half profits to end-January would not be sufficient to counter-balance the interim loss and it would report a pre-tax loss for the year. There would not be sufficient distributable reserves to pay preference dividends, and the final payment on the ordinary shares would also be axed.

Botnar named in Revenue warrant

By KEVIN EASON, MOTORING CORRESPONDENT

OCTAV Botnar is expected to return to Britain within days to face accusations of tax fraud that could involve as much as £100 million.

The Inland Revenue has issued a warrant for the arrest of the head of Nissan UK, the former independent distributor of Nissan cars in Great Britain.

Mr Botnar was on holiday in Switzerland when he was named at Teesside Magistrates' Court, Middlesbrough, on Thursday, in charges brought against Tore Arne Thorsen, manager of Scanstris, a Norwegian freight company, which has

commercial links with Nissan UK.

The Inland Revenue warrant comes after allegations that Mr Botnar's company undermined pre-tax profits by £100 million to avoid tax. Two Nissan UK executives, Michael Hunt, the assistant managing director, and Frank Shannon, the former finance director, appeared at Worthing Magistrates' Court also charged with alleged corporation tax fraud.

The company said that Mr Botnar, aged 78, was expected back in Britain soon, although the Inland Revenue said the tax authorities had not been informed of his plans.

The arrest warrant is another instalment in the 21-year saga of the German immigrant who founded a £1 billion empire by importing cars from Japan. Nissan UK was distributing 100,000 vehicles a year by the Eighties.

Last year, Mr Botnar failed in the courts to stop Nissan ending his distribution agreement, which will mean the eventual winding-up of the Nissan UK company, although other arms of his empire should remain intact.

Mr Botnar has always protested his innocence of tax irregularities.

Japanese owners silent as Daks falls

By OUR CITY STAFF

THE new Japanese owners of Daks Simpson were silent yesterday on what they thought about the halving of the fashion house's pre-tax profits in the year to July 1991.

San East UK, the British subsidiary of Sanryo Seiko, the Japanese clothing manufacturer, bought Daks for £65 million in February last year.

Yesterday Daks, which sells everything an English gentleman would need for a weekend at Balmoral, reported pre-tax profits of £2.1 million, against £4.61 million last time, on sales of £73.4 million, up from £69.6 million. Earnings per share fell from 41.42p to 15.59p, and the total dividend of 33.35p is payable to the parent company. It receives £1.5 million.

The group is reporting results publicly because it is obliged to, as it has a small number of cumulative preference shareholders. As a wholly owned subsidiary of a Japanese group it would have preferred not to. No one was prepared to comment on the halving of the pre-tax profit or the outlook for the current year.

The sale of Daks, which is popular with Japanese tourists, was made possible by the decision of Georgia Andrews, wife of the actor Anthony Andrews and granddaughter of the founder Simon Simpson, to sell her stake. She held 51 per cent of the ordinary shares and 8 per cent of the non-voting shares and received £19.4 million for her stake.

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The lights go out at Rumbelows

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

THE death of Rumbelows, one of the largest specialist players in the electrical market, marks a watershed in electrical retailing and confirms that the days of selling fridges, TVs and washing machines from Britain's high streets are numbered.

The future of electrical retailing lies with large, out-of-town superstores, which were pioneered early in the Eighties by Comet, part of the Kingfisher group, and which Currys, the Dixons white goods chain, is skilfully exploiting.

The decision of Thorn EMI, the parent company of Rumbelows, to shut the chain down with the loss of 800 jobs comes as no surprise. The electricals market is intensely competitive and Rumbelows made losses even in the boom years of the mid-Eighties. The company's market share has been whittled down to 3.9 per cent from 4.5 per cent over the past seven years, according to Verdict, the market research group.

With more than 500,000 square feet of space on the high street and a prod-

uct-mix dominated by large goods, Rumbelows was badly hit by a combination of recession and the move by consumers to out-of-town stores. A series of restructurings has done little to halt the losses.

If one of the largest high street chains, with a strong reputation for service and the backing of a major international company cannot make money, what hope is there for smaller chains and high street independents?

Ironically, Rumbelows had seen which way the wind was blowing. In 1987, it acquired a group of out-of-town stores called Atlantis and built it into a 40-strong chain.

Televisions and VCRs account for 37 per cent of Rumbelows' sales, according to Verdict: hi-fi and audio equipment makes up 16 per cent and washing machines, fridges and so on another 16 per cent. Fridge and freezer have 9 per cent; small appliances and other accessories, which have weathered recession better, account for only 17 per cent.

Currys, Comet, Cyclesdale and the privatised electricity companies are all looking out of town for expansion and the sale of Atlantis to one of them looks

likely. Selling fridges, freezers and TVs from large out-of-town units makes sense. Occupancy costs are much lower than on the high street and ranges of goods stocked are wider. High street outlets continue to be profitable for brown goods retailers such as Dixons, Tandy and Colortvision.

Thorn EMI may be getting out of Rumbelows at the bottom of the market. Electrical goods sales were static in 1990 at £8.7 billion after a period of double-digit sales growth in the Eighties, fuelled by product innovation, falling prices and rising prosperity. Demand is expected to improve this year as consumer spending starts to recover and new products arrive on the market. Sales of audio-visual products are forecast to lead the way. Revival in white goods depends on an upturn in the housing market.

Even when it arrives, renewed growth in the electricals market is unlikely to match the levels of the mid-Eighties. Thorn EMI has, therefore, thrown in the towel. The group says that even if a boom is just around the corner, increasing competition means that quitting now is the right course.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

It is fashionable in Washington to joke about the president's inability to cope with what he calls "the vision thing". But that failure is no longer a joking matter for Bush. His State of the Union message told a story of a president with no coherent view of America's future.

Irvin Stelzer, in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow

BUSINESS PROFILE: Sir Bryan Carsberg

The regulator who does it his way

Carol Leonard finds the man who takes over at the OFT in June is a cool customer who gets what he wants

Sir Bryan Carsberg, the Oftele director general, due to switch in June from Oftele to the Office of Fair Trading, the most powerful regulatory job in Britain, is a confident man.

While informed observers will admit that his regulatory effectiveness has not yet been conclusively proven, especially in such an omnipotent role as that which awaits him at the OFT, Carsberg, aged 53, has no doubts.

At a dinner in Tokyo two weeks ago, with the Japanese minister of post and telecommunications, he found himself on a stage with a karaoke machine. He chose the song *My Way*, says it could be the regulators' anthem, but then adds that he insisted upon rewriting some of the words. "There is one line," he says, "which goes: 'There were times, I guess you knew, when I hit off more than I could chew.' No way would I sing that. I announced that these words were wrong and that I always knew what I was about." Carsberg

'He looks a sweet little thing but has one of the sharpest minds I have come across'

laughs. The laugh turns into a lingering smile. The skin around his eyes creases into folds. The pale blue irises glint. He has a habit of smiling whenever he explains something of importance, looking perhaps for a glimmer of comprehension in your own eyes. It could appear patronising, but it does not. Instead he looks almost angelic, in a round-faced, gnome-like way.

"Yes, he does look like a sweet little thing, doesn't he," says John Arnold, professor of accounting at Manchester University, and a friend for 25 years. Then it is Arnold's turn to laugh, a slightly sarcastic laugh, thereby indicating that appearances can be misleading. "No, I'm not frightened of him, but some people are frightened by his intellect and coolness. He has one of the sharpest minds I have come across, he can disassemble problems in a way that no one can and he can be very difficult to keep up with." In one of Carsberg's earlier guises, as Arnold's predecessor as an

accountancy professor at Manchester University, he was, for a time, faculty dean. "He was respected by senior managers within the faculty," says Arnold, "but he aroused suspicion among other departments. There was competition for resources and yet Bryan usually got what he wanted. He plays his cards close to his chest."

Carsberg is not a man to take anything lying down. Nor has his intellectual ability ever been in question. As a schoolboy he got more than 90 marks out of 100 in his mathematics "O" level. In his accountancy finals he came top, nationally, in competition with 1,500 other trainees. He can still remember the marks he got for all his "O" level papers. His memory is not in question either.

In fact, if he has altered at all over the years, it is simply that he has gained confidence. "I have developed more self-confidence as I have grown older and as I found that the analysis I developed and tested seemed to work. You need a certain self-confidence to be able to

go out on a limb and accept the consequences. I used to worry much more than I do now and I used to be much more sensitive." He mentions a recent *Financial Times* article in which he was described as being intellectually arrogant. "I don't actually think I

am, but ten years ago that might have upset me. I have now come to terms with the fact that you can't do this sort of job without an element of personal criticism."

This growth in self-confidence indicates that, as a youth, he was perhaps lacking in confidence. Ask Carsberg — the name is of Swedish extraction — about his childhood and he paints the picture of the quiet, self-contained little boy — he is still only 5ft 5in tall — a prize-winning student, exceptionally numerate, with a small circle of close friends. He was also a competent sportsman. In the school football team — Bertram School — and house cricket team. "I was a middle-order batsman, a rather stodgy sort of batsman, hard to get out



Rarely a cross word: Sir Bryan and Lady Carsberg at home — he may hurry a tedious conversation but never loses his temper

and I accumulated runs slowly." Some of his colleagues at Oftele would argue that in this he has not changed. He is known within the telecommunications industry for his dogged determination. "I am an analytical person, my colleagues will probably tell you that I am unusually analytical. I like to work things out, to tease away at them." He is not a man who would speak or take action without thinking everything through carefully.

"I do everything thoughtfully and deliberately, never impulsively," he says. But he is not, he insists, high handed. "In an intellectual argument I will give people a tough time. Not an unpleasant time, but if they put forward an argument that I don't think holds water, I will say so and test it out, in the spirit of trying to get to the bottom of it." He delights in intellectual debate.

A comparative newcomer to

man management, he has developed a style all his own. He does not, he says, summon subordinates to his office, preferring to "wander the corridors" and visit them. He also expresses a dislike of excessively long meetings, but although time wasting can make him impatient, he has never been known to lose his temper. "I have never lost my temper at work and almost never at home," he says. He is given more to irritation and says his wife Margaret, mother of his two daughters, Debbie, aged 30, and Sarah, 27, can spot it at once. "She can tell from my body language, an element of tension creeps into my behaviour. If I think someone is saying something silly but it is impossible to say so so frankly, a certain expression comes over me. You can spot it in my mannerisms and also in the way I try to hurry a conversation."

Carsberg thought long and hard

before accepting the Oftele job, and initially turned it down. "The government wanted someone to do it for five years but at the LSE, where I had a very happy chair, with an interesting portfolio, they would only agree to three years. I wasn't prepared to give all that up." The government relented and agreed to a three-year term. He had once again got his own way, even if he has now been in office for a total of eight years.

"Underestimated the job potential at the time, it's been the most marvellous job," he prides himself on having "established in the UK that competition is not only a reality possible in telecommunications but also a good idea. Back in 1984 when I accepted the job some people said I was crazy, that that wouldn't be possible, and that it would really be about regulating a strong monopolist."

He sees one of his big achieve-

ments as being the introduction of British Telecom's customer compensation scheme. "It is one of the things I'm proudest of, the £5 a day compensation if your phone is not repaired on time or a new line installed properly. That has been a world first and it has had a marvellous effect on BT's performance."

Carsberg is also excited by the prospects for mobile communications, which he hails as the telephone network of the future. "We've got more competition in that than any other country in the world and in a few years' time I think everybody will have a telephone in their pocket or handbag. Cars will fall, through competition and technology, to much the same level as a residential bill." He predicts also that compared with the 20,000 people in Britain now receiving telephone services from cable television companies, rather than BT, "that number

might grow to 10 per cent of the population in five years."

Carsberg, who claims he is more naturally suited to the world of regulation than academia, accepted the OFT job much more readily than that of Oftele. "Of course the mix of challenges will be different, but there is still going to be that thread, of competition and pro-consumer regulation, running through it. I am very enthusiastic about those policies."

That enthusiasm aside, he refuses to disclose how he will vote in the general election, although he does admit he has always voted for the same party. "I am a professional regulator and I would like to feel that I can work happily with whatever government was democratically elected. I wouldn't want to create any barriers. I am in favour of competition and privatisation, I make no bones about that, but I would present those as professional views, not political."

To accept the OFT job, he turned down several others, some offering double the government salary of about £95,000 that he will receive. Life is, he says, too short for him to be motivated by money alone. He is not a materialistic man. His six-bedroom house in Guildford is not opulently furnished, he eats and drinks sparingly — "perhaps a glass of wine with a meal, but never beer. I have hardly ever been to a pub" — runs up to 20 miles a week and has taken part in four marathons. His only indulgences are, he says, exotic holidays to places like the Maldives, China, Australia — "I work hard and so I feel I deserve them" — and weekly trips to the theatre or opera. "I'm a real nut for Wagner actually, it just suddenly grabbed me one time."

Friends and colleagues are surprised by his emotional reaction to music. Even more when they learn he once shed a tear listening to Peer Gynt. For he is, they say, as analytical in his dealings with people as he is with economic problems. He is always polite but can appear to lack the human touch.

Ask Carsberg to turn those considerable analytical powers on himself and he will conclude that he is a loner. "When I started at Oftele someone drew the analogy between being a long distance runner and doing the job. I do. I think there is something in that." He has, of course, analysed the subject accurately, I ask him for the name of a close friend. "I have a difficulty here," he admits. "He is always scrupulously honest. I get on easily with people but I don't have close friends. Therefore I don't feel there is anybody who knows me that well."

WEEK ENDING Matthew Bond

Tory vision promises a land of milk and money

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the public sector, Week Ending brings you *Privatisation II*, the sequel.

Yes, the "p" word is back, bigger and bolder than ever. John Major may have called off to his desert island, but *The Best is Yet to Come*, but as the week came to a close another Sinatra-style better was looking more appropriate — *Her Way*.

For with pre-election manoeuvring approaching fever-pitch, it is clear that the Tory faithful are pressing hard for a campaign based upon the tried and trusted formula of lower taxes and more public sector self-offs. The question is what is there left to sell?

The Institute of Directors, a body where the new caring, sharing Nineties never really dawned, is certainly not short of suggestions. Peter Morgan, its formidable director-general, fairly rattles them off. First he wants the ones we know about out of the way — British Rail, British Coal, the Post Office — and then swiftly on to the ones we do not, such as motorways and government-owned buildings. Enough to be going on with?

Certainly not. Mr Morgan is far from happy about the level of political control in such organisations as the BBC, the health service and education. And how does he envisage this control being reduced? Anyone requiring more than one guess can go straight to the bottom of the privatisation class... just as soon as they have paid their tuition fees.

Whether Sir Bob Reid has been paying his privatisation fees remains a moot point. This week he did nothing to allay suspicions that since moving to the publicly funded chair of British Rail he has gone distinctly native. For once again Sir Bob remained tight-lipped — positively Keveined — about any BR self-off, be it the everything-must-go version favoured by the transport department or the sepia-tinted,

regionally devolved form preferred by Isambard K Major at Number 10.

Sir Bob preferred to concentrate on the management challenge faced by BR, regardless of who owns it. "We know that our customers' expectations rise faster than our performance," What his long-suffering customers know is that if privatisation gets the go-ahead, it will be faster than a speeding bullet.

Not that Sir Bob is terminally halted at a privatisation red light. After all, he has

plans to switch from being, in effect, a statutory co-operative to one that farmers can choose to join.

Not surprisingly, there are those who think such proposals do not go far enough. Daily Cream, the MMB's dairy products subsidiary, is to become an independent company and looks well on the way to an early sell-off. So why not go the whole hog and privatise the MMB as well? Why not indeed. But already the boss of the Dairy Trades Federation, Brian Smith, has questioned whether the MMB should be restructured in one piece or split into smaller, regional companies.

Here speaks a man who has captured the mood of the day. One can already see the City prospectuses — a dotation of Great Western Dairies, a private placing of London, Midland and Scottish Creameries — heralding a return to the golden days of British dairying. I wonder if sepia-tinted milk tastes good?

Common sense would suggest that more competition in a privatised dairy industry should lead to lower milk prices. Just as it has, of course, in the telephone, energy and water industries and may shortly on the railways.

But just to make doubly sure, a feasibility study will see whether a cross-Channel liquid milk pipeline can be built alongside the pipe that will bring continental gas supplies into competition with British Gas. But given French farmers' legendary aversion to open-market forces, what works for gas may prove less effective with milk.

The alternative, especially if the MMB is floated in one piece, is to pursue the now-established structure to limit prices charged by a newly privatised but still largely monopolistic company. Oftele, Ofgas and Ofwater are all keen to show that price regulation can work. But Ofmilk? Somehow it leaves a rather sour taste in the mouth.

TWA flies into chapter 11 protection

FROM PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

CARL Icahn, the former corporate raider, is expected to take up control of Trans World Airlines, America's sixth-largest carrier, which yesterday sought chapter 11 protection against creditors to facilitate a \$1 billion debt reduction.

A TWA spokesman said he expected the carrier's finances to remain under bankruptcy court supervision for six months. "But while that is happening, it will be business as usual," he said.

Mr Icahn, who borrowed against TWA assets to buy the airline in 1986, claims to have \$500 million cash, \$100 million due in the next 30 days from asset sales of the Philadelphia and Baltimore-London routes, and \$200 million of new borrowings.

He said: "Having these funds will, in my view, be more than adequate to enable us to continue to conduct our normal operations and should ensure the successful completion of our reorganisation. We will emerge from this stronger and more competitive."

The financial shake-up will cut debts by \$1 billion and save \$150 million in annual interest payments. TWA's creditors are being asked to accept new shares in exchange for their debts. Under a plan announced six months ago, this would have reduced Mr Icahn's stake in the re-capitalised TWA from 90 per cent to between 20 and 45 per cent. TWA added: "We are not sure what his stake will be at the moment."

TWA is the sixth American carrier to seek chapter 11 protection in the past few years. Two of them, Eastern Air Lines and Pan American World Airways, are in liquidation. TWA, one of the oldest and most financially troubled of America's airlines, had been expected to reorganise through the bankruptcy courts this year.

Last summer, TWA had to sell its entire London operations at Heathrow to American Airlines for \$445 million to stay in the air.

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Edmondson: 'Interest'

confidence in income trusts remains brittle.

The Hang Seng index closed 30.31 points higher at 4,601.78. The market will be closed on February 4 to 6 for the Lunar New Year holidays. (Reuters)

Closing Prices Page 25

[illegible]

BTR Wn 1995/96	62	-4	Long (N) Wn	3	...
Basile Childs Jn Wn	115	...	Long (S) Wn	1	...
Bristol Water Non-Voting (1)	121	...	River & Merf Tr Inc 12-tp	103	...
Bristol Telecom Nn (235)	144	+25	do -Sto Speed Pn 12-tp	119	+1
Burn Swarth Child 10p (140)	144	+2	Winn Group Wn (60)	3	...
Burn Mung 2	14	...	Winn Group Wn	51	...
Capital Industries 1p	6.3	...			
Columbian SA 1991 Wn	283	-2	RIGHTS ISSUES		
Engrs Preformal Capn (95)	90	...	Airbank Leisure Sp N/P (3)	18	...
Farnham 3	10	...	BH Group 10p N/P (30)	80	-2
Ferns 3	10	...	BH Group 10p N/P (220)	24	...
Hong Kong Zee Dr 1p	26	...	Hi-Tec Sports N/P (150)	24	...
Latam Amer Inc & Ap (104)	51	...	Whosave N/P (185)	74	+1

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High-risk driv

Societies make the savers pay

When is a mortgage rate cut really a way of making more money for the lender? The answer is when savings rates are cut by more and sooner. Building societies are cutting their savers' rates up to a month before lower rates will reduce mortgage payments for existing borrowers. They also seem to be taking an opportunity to increase the margin between savers' rates and mortgage rates and in some cases have two goes at cutting rates within a few weeks.

Should the Budget herald a base rate cut, societies do not rule out another mortgage rate cut. Of course, this will also be another opportunity to widen their margins and their profitability at the expense of savers.

Nationwide was the first to announce its reduced savers' rates. They apply from today. Its borrowers have to wait until March 1 for their reduction. The savers' cuts are on average 0.53 per cent when the base mortgage rate is being cut by 0.51 per cent

and larger loans are being reduced by less.

Abbey National will announce its reduction early next week to take effect almost immediately. This will be the second slice off savings rates this year for the former building society, which led mortgage rates down.

At the beginning of January, it shaved 0.1 per cent or 0.2 per cent off its gross savings rates. The Halifax has this week responded to that cut with a tidying up of its savings rates.

The gross rates are being cut by between 0.05 per cent and 0.45 per cent. In the next few days or weeks the cut to take account of mortgage reduction will be detailed for savers.

Some may still be unaware just how low their returns are now compared with this time last year. The scrapping of composite rate tax gave all banks and building



COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

societies the chance to alter the way they present interest rate tables. Now the most prominent figures are the gross rates, not the return after tax is deducted by the society even though the majority of savers receive net interest and many have to pay a further slug of tax to take account of the higher rate.

Gross rates are quoted first in brochures, and some building societies quote nothing else on posters. Those passing one building society branch proclaiming an interest rate of 11.15 per cent in all its windows

would have to go inside to find out that the only way this can be paid is to non-taxpayers, who have registered for gross interest. The net rate is 8.36 per cent. Savers could do well to watch the net rates and the timing of any cuts.

Clever Halifax

Clever timing from the Halifax when announcing its new charges on savings accounts means that at its annual meeting there will be no embarrassing vote against the

charges on pensioners and the low-paid announced last weekend.

Resolutions supported by 50 members with £100 or more in their accounts continuously for two years had to be with the largest society by last night. Even the angriest member of the society would have been hard-pressed, from first picking up a brochure last Saturday listing the £2.50 a quarter charge on accounts falling below £50 for 30 days and 60p per counter withdrawal after the first two months, to rally support and get the documentation to the Halifax headquarters in time for yesterday's cut-off for submission of resolutions for the May annual meeting.

This means that thousands or even hundreds of thousands of savers cannot express their objections to the charges through a postal ballot. They would have to feel strongly enough to take time

off work and travel to Yorkshire for the day. Few people have faith in the power of a private letter of protest to a financial institution.

Last year, the Nationwide executives had to face a packed hall in London to defend its decision to lock savers into an account paying a lower rate of interest than a new account. Those who could not attend could make their feelings known by voting for a resolution asking for existing savers to be treated as well as new ones. Almost 90,000 voted for the resolution even though it would not have bound Nationwide's policymaking if it had succeeded. But the society has said it will think again before disadvantaging existing savers in its 90-day account.

No such discomfort for the Halifax, though. By next year's deadline for resolutions those who do not like the charges will have left the society. And in the true traditions of building society democracy, the Halifax will be able to keep to itself how many people close their accounts.

Insurers fight surge in thefts by raising premiums and moving boundaries for charges

Contents cover may double in price

BY LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

MANY household insurance policies are set to rise by 20 per cent or more for a second year running and some policyholders will find their premiums doubled this year. The rise in thefts is mainly responsible. Such has been the increase in claims, some companies say, that one increase averaging 20 per cent in 1992 may not be enough. At the same time, companies are getting tougher on paying out claims in full.

Weekend Money readers are querying some rises, especially if they have not claimed. One owner of a one-bedroom flat in London NW8 was told this week her annual premium would rise from £242 to £425. This was because her area had become higher risk, according to the insurer, and jewellery was being charged for differently. The jewellery alone added £100 to the premiums.

Another reader, who had made a claim for £4,000 for the first burglary during the five years she has lived in Earls Court, London, was told that to continue the policy she had to agree to pay the first £1,000 of any future theft claim.

The Association of British Insurers says on average, com-

ponents policies rose 15 per cent last year although in some areas people could have paid much more if insurance companies rerated the area as at higher risk of theft. Policyholders who have never claimed still have to pay more unless they find a company that is happier with the area.

Latest theft claim figures for the third quarter of 1991 show the amount claimed was 75 per cent up on the same period of 1990 and claims rose 55 per cent.

The rise in the size of claims has made some companies more vigilant in assessing them. Some believe policyholders are inflating claims dishonestly. Callum Spreng, of General Accident, said: "In the last two years the cost of burglary claims has doubled for us but the number of burglaries has only gone up 50 per cent. It may be more stolen, it may be there are more burglaries, or it may be claims are exaggerated. It's probably a bit of each. We do know that if anyone accepts a lot less and asks for cash there is a case for more investigation and if they phone every day we take another look."

Michael Auld, of Guardian Royal Exchange, said: "We have seen it all before. Every



time there is a recession you see a rise in crime and a bigger rise in claims. As premiums rise, so more and more feel they must get their money's worth first by making a claim and secondly by making it as big as possible."

The Association of British Insurers said: "Companies seem to be looking at claims to make sure people don't try to be fraudulent. People who lose a television may be tempted to put it in a top price but the companies know if it can be replaced more cheaply."

AA Insurance raised premiums an average 20 per cent last year. This was implemented by reviews in March, July and December. "Every-one will be reviewing over the year rather than all at once," AA said. By doing this, the insurance companies hope to

avoid many large numbers of people changing to another insurer. Jewellery cover has doubled for many AA policyholders because it is no longer charged according to the number of bedrooms but by the post code of the property.

General Accident raised premiums 20 per cent last July and more rises are under review. Norwich Union raised premiums by the same at the start of the year. The Prudential raised premiums by 4 per cent to 25 per cent from January 1. In addition to rises in contents cover, many householders are finding how much buildings' cover has risen because of subsidence claims. In parts of the South-East premiums have almost doubled but in parts of Scotland, they have fallen for contents and buildings.

Shopping around can save pounds

BY LIZ DOLAN
AND SARA MCCONNELL

NEARLY six in every 10 householders insure their homes through their mortgage lenders, even though, in most cases, they could find cheaper policies elsewhere. Contents insurance is a more flexible market, with fewer than 20 per cent insuring through their lenders; but most people are still inclined to stay with the same insurer.

Jeff Tate, product manager with Swinton Insurance, the insurance adviser, said people should buy through brokers, who offer a wide choice of policies, rather than banks and building societies with their limited range.

It is worth obtaining a quote from insurers like Direct Line who do not use brokers and save on commission. Another way to save is to limit excess for a cheaper premium. A keen handyman may prefer to deal with minor problems, and leave the insurer to pay for big ones. Direct Line offers a 5 per cent discount on contents policies with a £25 excess. Pointless extras like bicycle insurance for households that do not

own bicycles can add needlessly to premiums. Most companies offer blanket packages, but some, including Norman Insurance and Minister Insurance, now sell basic cover with optional add-ons. Some companies charge less if policyholders install security systems. Swinton cuts premiums by 15 per cent if policyholders have window and door locks, an approved alarm system and belong to a neighbourhood watch scheme. Older people should seek special rates: Bishops-gate and Sun Alliance cut rates for people over 50. Norwich Union for over-55s. No claims bonuses are worth considering. The Automobile Association sells one under-written by Municipal General Insurance, and City of

Westminster has a similar policy for Swinton.

Now that more buildings' policies are rated according to postcode, people in high-risk districts should shop around. Cover for £100,000 in London SW4 costs £180 a year with Direct Line, £260 with Norwich Union and £340 with Sun Alliance. But in Manchester M14, NU charges £260 per annum for the same cover, whereas Sun Alliance is £210 and Direct Line £170. A special British Insurance and Investment Broker's Association policy has a flat premium rate of £252 for £155,000 of cover. There are no plans to change to a postcode system.

Drivers can make big savings on car insurance but some of the most obvious methods are a false economy, said Peter Farmer, the Automobile Association's development manager.

Reducing cover from comprehensive to third party, fire and theft could be expensive in an accident and putting a younger, higher-risk driver on a mature driver's policy could make the insurance cover invalid if the riskier driver was the main driver.

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High-risk drivers hit in the pocket

By SARA MCCONNELL

DRIVERS should be prepared for an expensive year, particularly if they live in an inner city, are under 25 or have a high performance car. Insurance premiums have already started to rise since the start of this year by about 10 per cent, on top of average increases of 25 per cent last year. Some drivers will pay 100 per cent more when they renew their cover, and compulsory excesses are being imposed.

Insurers are fighting back after huge losses on motor insurance last year. They blame the recession, dearer motor repairs and personal injury awards and more accidents because of more crowded roads. Claims for theft of or from vehicles were particularly high at £432 million in 1990.

The government is trying to get motorists to take more responsibility for their own car security. February 11 will be the start of Car Crime Prevention Year with a £5 million advertising campaign. But John Patten, the home office minister, said he was very disappointed that insurers were not reducing premiums or offering discounts to drivers who attached locks or alarms to their existing cars.

The Association of British Insurers conceded most insurers were doing precisely the opposite, raising premiums for most motorists this year. Only a handful offer discounts for cars fitted with locks or alarms by

manufacturers. Younger drivers will be hardest hit, particularly if they drive sporty "hot hatch" cars, like a Ford Sierra RS Cosworth. Norwich Union said last October that a driver between 17 and 25 driving a car like a Golf GTI and living in one of a growing number of high risk areas might have to pay 100 per cent more for insurance at next renewal. Norwich Union has regraded all areas

short of cash for repairs to claim for damage and risk losing their no-claims bonus. Eagle Star is one of the first insurers to show its hand this year, with a 10 per cent average increase in premiums on policies renewed after January 1. Last year, premiums rose an average of 8.5 per cent in July and 8 per cent in October.

From last month, comprehensive insurance premiums

have risen 9.9 per cent, while cover for third party, fire and theft has risen by 10.9 per cent. But in common with other insurers, Eagle Star is also imposing compulsory excesses for the highest risk young drivers and cars.

For the first time there will be a £100 excess on claims for theft and malicious damage. The maximum any driver can claim for in-car stereo systems is £500 on comprehensive policies and £250 on other policies. The excess for glass replacement has risen from £25 to £40, reflecting the growing tendency for thieves to break a side win-



Expensive mix: young driver and Ford Sierra Cosworth

for risk, so many people in safe suburbs will be paying as much as their inner city counterparts. GA is also regrading its areas.

Excesses for fire and theft are also being imposed by most major insurers for the first time. Companies say privately that fire and theft claims are one result of the continuing recession. Cars which fail their MOT are sometimes torched by their owners so that they can claim the insurance, rather than having to pay for repairs. Alternatively, the car may be reported missing. The recession could also tempt people

have risen 9.9 per cent, while cover for third party, fire and theft has risen by 10.9 per cent. But in common with other insurers, Eagle Star is also imposing compulsory excesses for the highest risk young drivers and cars.

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Tax change hits annuity cash

By HELEN FRIDMAN

FROM March one of the attractions of annuities will be reduced. The tax-free element of the annuity income is to be cut. It will be the second time this year that annuity returns have been downgraded, although one group who will benefit from the forthcoming change will be non-taxpayers.

Despite the change, annuities are still likely to offer one of the highest fixed incomes available to elderly investors. However, it will become all the more important to seek out the best possible rates.

Pension annuities are not being affected by the tax changes. But many people who have their own private pension policies are losing out because they are neglecting the opportunity to shop around for the best annuity rates when they get to retirement. They are therefore ending up with lower pensions.

The main determinant of annuity rates is the general level of interest rates. Insurers normally use long-dated gilts and other fixed-interest securities as their underlying investments.

But other considerations enter into the equation. Nigel Sibby of R. Watson & Sons, the consulting actuaries, said: "An important element for many companies will be marketing considerations. If an insurer is keen to attract business it will pitch its rates accordingly."

However, annuity business has high capital requirements and when companies have attracted enough business they often let their rates slide for a while. This will not affect existing investors as rates are fixed at the time of the investment. But new investors cannot rely on the same companies.



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Ecclesiastical 1,671	Standard Life 1,488
Standard Life 1,670	Ecclesiastical 1,488
Sun Alliance 1,642	Sun Alliance 1,470
Co-operative Ins 1,639	Co-operative Ins 1,458

PENSION ANNUITIES	
Men aged 65	Women aged 60
Equitable Life 1,315	Provident Life 1,119
Provident Life 1,314	Equitable Life 1,114
Britannic 1,302	Britannic 1,106
General 1,302	Provident Capital 1,094
Pearl 1,300	Sun Life 1,084

Source: Planned Savings Data Service

With general annuity business, companies' generosity has also been curbed since January 1 by the change in

their tax position. Previously, they could offset the whole of the annuity payments against tax; now this applies only to the interest element.

When the tax-free "capital" element of annuity payments is reduced on March 1 to reflect investors' longer life expectancies — previously capital elements were based on tables drawn up in 1955 — the interest content will increase. Consequently the insurance companies will have less tax to pay and they will be able to raise their gross annuities. But taxpayers are likely to receive lower net payments unless companies are prepared to make up the difference.

Companies have reacted differently. Allied Dunbar, for example, felt it may have to reduce its annuity rates by up to 20 per cent and therefore decided to pull out of the home income plan market.

where annuities play a central part in enabling elderly homeowners to gain extra income by unlocking some of the value of their home. But this part of its business was never part of its mainstream activities.

At Standard Life, where the change will not come into effect until after its financial year end in November, John Hylands, an actuary, said: "I believe the impact of the new tax rules will be broadly neutral as far as we are concerned."

Nevertheless, Age Concern has expressed its worries to the government about the effects of the change in annuity taxation on elderly investors.

The main drawback of annuities is that although they can provide a high fixed income, the investor loses control of the capital once an investment is made. Those with a personal pension policy can take part of the policy payout as a tax-free lump sum but the remainder must be invested in an annuity to provide a pension.

Most insurers offer pension annuities but, as with general annuities, the amounts vary considerably. People often assume they must take the pension from the company to which they have paid their premiums but this is not the case. If they find an insurer offering better rates, they can ask their original company to transfer their pension fund. This could make a considerable difference to their standard of living during their retirement.

Those with a pre-1988 personal pension policy have another consideration. The cash sums available under those contracts are larger than under current rules. If swapped to a new insurer, the pension will come under present legislation which restricts the tax-free lump sum to 25 per cent of the fund. However, the increase in pension may be worth it.

Scottish safety strategy

By SARA MCCONNELL

AN INVESTMENT strategy which aims to reduce gradually a pension fund's exposure to equities as retirement approaches has been launched by Scottish Life on its Talisman range of unit-linked pension plans.

Under the retirement investment strategy, funds are switched gradually from Scottish Life's UK Equity fund into the managed fund 15 years before retirement. The managed fund combines equities and fixed-rate investments. Five years before retirement the funds are gradually switched again into the deposit and fixed-interest funds. The switches are free and automatic.

Ray Milne, Scottish Life's assistant general manager (marketing), said the greatest long-term return was achieved by investing in equities but added: "The risk of this is that people could end up with an income loss of thousands of pounds if the market falls just before their retirement. The compromise solution in the past has been to select the managed fund, but this falls short of full equity investment in the early years and still leaves the possibility of a sudden drop in fund value just before retirement."

The value of managed funds fell by about 30 per cent in the crash of 1987, Mr Milne said.

Switches are gradual to avoid moving the whole fund on the wrong day. However, plan holders are not compelled to have their money switched.

Scottish Life has also cut its administration charges by up to 65 per cent on regular premium plans and up to 60 per cent on single premium plans and pension transfers. This means more of the contribution will be invested.

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*Source: Planned Savings, September 1990

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TWO new savings accounts for children up to 16 have been launched by the Dudley building society. The Rainbow account for those up to 11 pays up to 8.2 per cent for savings of £500 and over. The Spectrum account for children aged 12 to 16 pays interest of 7 per cent for investments of between £1 and £100, 7.5 per cent on balances of between £100 and £250 and 8 per cent on balances of over £250. Both accounts are instant access and have a passbook.

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Leaseholders fight for legal shelter

By LINDSAY COOK, WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

THOUSANDS of homeowners are waiting nervously for a government announcement this month which should give them the right to stay in their homes on fair terms. They are people whose homes fell outside the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act.

The 50,000 people concerned have declining leases and no right to buy the freehold. Unless the law changes, they can be thrown out on the streets when their leases expire. Some ground landlords are refusing to grant extensions. Others are asking very high prices.

Now the Department of the Environment has indicated that it plans to change the law to help them. They are to be included in proposals to help flat owners with short leases or who fall outside planned legislation to enable flat owners to buy the freehold of their properties.

Currently, to qualify for the right to buy the freehold of a property, or to extend a lease by 50 years, the ground rent has to be no more than two-thirds of the rateable value, which should be no more than £1,500 in London or £750 elsewhere.

The Leasehold Enfranchisement Association, established in October 1990 after the publication of a letter in *Weekend Money*, now has almost 2,000 members campaigning for a change to the law. They have the promise of change and want it quickly, as delay could see hundreds more losing their homes.

Joan South, campaign coordinator, said: "Just before the last election we thought that a private member's bill was going to put us in the same position as other people with leasehold houses, but because of the election it did not get a second reading."

"The next election will be too late for many. We need a timetable and a cut-off date so that, however long the legislation takes, people do not lose the right because their lease runs out." When the 1967 act was going through it was backdated to 1964.

In November, Sir George Young, housing minister, said proposed legislation to give commonhold rights to flat owners would allow amendments to the Leasehold Reform Act 1967. He also said the government was looking sympathetically at including long leaseholders or higher rateable houses.

The association wants those with high rateable values or ground rents to be treated in the same way as those who came within the original legislation. "We want the right to renew leases

or buy the freehold under the 1974 formula under the Act," Mrs South said.

"A statutory formula based on the market value would be so much fairer. Now the landlords can just think of any figure they choose or say they are not selling."

Mrs South stands to lose her home in west London if the proposals do not become law before the next election. Her lease runs out in 1997 and she has been asked for £1.2 million to renew it. Her ground rent, which has been fixed for the 31 years she has lived in the house, would also be subject to review.

On the Cadogan Estate in central London, Patricia Loder-Dyer's lease runs out in 1995 and the landlords are refusing to extend it. She has lived in the house for more than 40 years. Moving in after the Second World War, she and her husband almost reconstructed the property, she said. "We spent an enormous amount of money and that will be lost. It is a tremendous worry."

Not only people with very short leases are affected. Those with leases of 25 or 30 years cannot move because potential buyers cannot get a mortgage to buy their homes.

Ground rent reviews can have horrifying results. One elderly man was asked for an increase from £200 a year to £10,700. This was later reduced. Another leaseholder has been asked for £100,000 now to add 20 years to a lease which expires in 2004. The association, which is based at 10 Upper Phillimore Gardens, London W8, emphasises that not all the properties which fall outside the Leasehold Reform Act are grand. Many leaseholders are excluded because their ground landlord has increased their ground rents to more than two thirds of modest rateable values.

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Worry: Patricia Loder-Dyer outside her home

Halifax allows 'free' quarter

SAVERS with a balance of less than £50 in a Halifax account are to be given one quarter's grace before they incur the new £2.50 maintenance charge, it emerged this week. The brochures on display in branches for the past week do not make this clear (Lindsay Cook writes).

The brochures do not give a date, but advertisements from the building society had said charges started from February 1. Now it says no existing customer will be charged before May 1.

However, John Walsh, general manager savings, said there had been no change in the way the charges would be levied. It had always been planned to waive the charge for customers in the first quarter in which they fell below the £50 limit on 30 days - whether it were this quarter or next year - and to write, warning them that they would have incurred a charge under the new system but that it would not be levied. If they failed to raise the balance over the following three months the money would be deducted from the account.

The society is looking "at the precise application of the rules" said Mr Walsh. "We will not charge the physically disabled and blind for counter withdrawals." There were still administrative details to be worked out.

From May 1 other customers who have less than £250 in their savings accounts will be charged 60p for the third and subsequent counter withdrawals each month. Similarly, cheques will be cost £1.

Customers who have opened Halifax Cardcash accounts as a requirement of the society to make insurance payments connected with their mortgages will also be exempted from the quarterly charge.

Mr Walsh said that the society had received fewer complaints than expected. The Halifax is offering a second unit trust to its customers through the joint venture company set up with Standard Life. The Income Advantage fund is also available as a tax-free personal equity plan. There is a 1 per cent launch bonus. Withdrawals can be at any time.

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INTEREST RATES ROUNDUP

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
BANKS						
Ordinary Dep A/c	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
Fixed Term Deposits						
1 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
2 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
3 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
4 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
5 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
HIGH INTEREST CHEQUE ACCOUNTS						
Bank of Scotland	6.45	6.45	6.45	6.45	6.45	6.45
Barclays	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
Co-operative	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
First Direct	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
Halifax	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
Lloyds	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
Midland	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
Norfolk	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
Paragon	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
TSB	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
Yorkshire	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
BUILDING SOCIETIES						
Ordinary Share	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25
Fixed Term	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
1 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
2 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
3 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
4 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
5 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
NATIONAL SAVINGS						
Ordinary A/c	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Fixed Term	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
1 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
2 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
3 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
4 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
5 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS						
Ordinary A/c	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Fixed Term	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
1 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
2 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
3 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
4 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
5 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
LARGER LOANS						
Ordinary A/c	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Fixed Term	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
1 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
2 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
3 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
4 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
5 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
BUILDING SOCIETIES						
Ordinary Share	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25
Fixed Term	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
1 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
2 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
3 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
4 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
5 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
BANKS						
Ordinary A/c	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Fixed Term	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
1 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
2 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
3 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
4 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
5 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50

Bank	Current Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year
OTHER (INSURANCE COMPANY)						
Ordinary A/c	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Fixed Term	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
1 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
2 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
3 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
4 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
5 Year	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50

Despair over Halifax decision to impose account charges

From Mrs Rosemary Barker

Sir, Your item today (Weekend Money, January 25) about the decision of the Halifax building society to levy charges on small savings accounts has filled me with despair.

When he was 18, my son was encouraged by the National Westminster Bank to overdraw on his account to a sum which eventually was rather more than his gross monthly pay. He then decided to return to study, so we paid off his overdraft and he moved his finances to a building society. The system has worked very well for almost two years, as he knows there is no risk of his withdrawing

money that he does not have, which you rightly describe in your leader as the precise reason for which people opt for the cardcash account. Only building societies offer this safeguard.

Now what is he to do? He will either have to pay charges on his building society account, or return to a system which for him and for many other young people has proved catastrophic.

Is it too late for us to hope that the Halifax will see the damage the proposed change will do?

Yours faithfully,
ROSEMARY BARKER,
19 Lion Hill,
Bristol.



Brixton blues

From Miss Louise Peachey

Sir, Your article (January 25) stated that the Halifax Building Society hoped to reduce queues, but this is only possible if its cash dispensers work, which they do not at

their Brixton branch on Saturday mornings.
Yours faithfully,
LOUISE PEACHEY,
Louise Peachey & Associates,
6 Lorn Road,
SW9.

Niggardly bank

From Mr Giles Bateman

Sir, Like Mr Nisbet (January 25), I have been protesting to my local branch about the Lloyds Bank's mail forwarding impost. The manager has advised me to write to the chairman of the bank, Sir Jeremy Morse. I may yet have to do so.

I have been a satisfied Lloyds customer for eight years longer than Mr Nisbet, and I do not want to change banks now. My itinerant son is, though for other reasons, unlikely to stay with Lloyds and I am certainly not trying to persuade him to remain.

However, I have circumvented the £5 charge by asking my branch to hold mail and inform me so that I can call for it. Better than nothing. But what do you call a bank that imposes a punitive charge for a service to its customers while it has, in my case, benefited continuously from a healthy maintained credit balance? I call it niggardly and mean-spirited.

Yours faithfully,
GILES BATEMAN,
Hocker Edge Oast,
Cranbrook, Kent.

Run out of Pep

From P. G. Lankester

Sir, I have noted those unfortunate people who have made such small gains with their Peps. Please print my woe.

Bardays have managed Pep 1988, cost £3,046.

Bardays have managed Pep 1992, valuation £2,241.

Should I cash it and put it under the bed?

Yours faithfully,
P. G. LANKESTER,
"Pineda", School Lane,
Brimfield, Ludlow,
Shropshire.

Letters are welcomed, but The Times regrets it cannot give individual replies or advice. No legal responsibility can be accepted for advice or statements in these columns and independent professional advice should be sought.

Security of personal pension schemes guaranteed by law

From the chief executive, the Corporation of Insurance and Financial Advisers

Sir, On Saturday January 25, you published an article entitled "Beware the siren song of a pension transfer salesman". Many of the comments were factual and supported by examples, but surely it is obvious that comments from the marketing manager of Family Assurance would be designed to project the company in a more favourable light than the rest of the industry.

No comment is made about the personal pension plan's security which, unlike com-

I take exception to the inference that it is unsafe to use 13 per cent as a projected growth rate in personal pension plans because the actual growth rate "could be very different". It often is — between 20-80 per cent higher.

Any quotations given by brokers are supplied by insurance companies and comply with all government regulations giving any relevant statements with regard to assumed growth rates.

No comment is made about the personal pension plan's security which, unlike com-

pany schemes, is guaranteed by law, a situation some newspaper employees look on with envy.

You admit that the worst unit link pension fund achieved "less than 9 per cent per year". This obviously is more than 8 per cent, which is higher than the returns you quote for final salary schemes. There is no mention made of the qualifying conditions the employees must meet to satisfy the schemes or of the portability (or lack of it) of the company scheme against the total flexibility of the personal pension scheme. As with all investment decisions, it is vitally important to balance the potential gain against the risk factors involved, so why do you not mention that although a personal pension scheme can accept virtually any transfer monies, in many instances it must also guarantee the same "guaranteed minimum pension" rights as the scheme the money is transferred from. This is also the case with a "Section 32" buyout scheme.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN BAINBRIDGE
Chief Executive, CIFA,
Druids House,
Crendon Street,
High Wycombe,
Bucks.

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Portfolio PLATINUM

For readers who may have missed a copy of The Times this week, we repeat below the week's Portfolio price changes (today's are on page 25).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50

ELECTION WARNING:

The Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats are both expected to win the next general election. But what if they are forced to do the same?

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AND SCOREBOARD

WEEKEND TIMES

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 1 1992

Le vin, le pain and la vie en rose

Robin Young
explores Paris, one
of the destinations
The Times invites
two to visit for the
price of one

With the world as your oyster, where would you place the pearl? The French news magazine *Le Point* recently conducted a poll to discover its readers' favourite cities. Stockholm came top, Paris eighth, London trailed in 28th.

If time had been no object, my wife would have seized on the chance to reintroduce me to the land of her birth. XXXX and Crocodile Dundee. With even a week at our disposal she would have undertaken to show me all the archaeological and ornithological wonders of Israel. But we only had a weekend, so naturally we went to Paris.

Immediately accessible, ever seductive, Paris has a wan and limpid charm in winter. You see the streets as Pissarro and Sisley painted them, washed, cold and misty. For the most part it is Parisians, not tourists, who people the boulevards and parks.

We chose the Hôtel Lutetia as our base because it is the grand palace of the Left Bank — comfortable for the middle-aged, yet geographically intermingled with the memories of youth.

One object to fulfil with a bargain break like this is to revisit old haunts. Another is to make new discoveries. In Paris we could do both.

We ate at the rebuilt La Coupole, the "sidewalk academy" of Montparnasse. Its regulars, outraged when a modern office block was raised above it, are all reconciled to the changes now and have returned. Lunch was worth waiting for among the newly painted pillars of the convivial canteen, as long-aproned waiters swept past with trays held aloft.

Then into the winding streets of Montmartre, past the Moulin de la Galette (Renoir's anchor, the restaurant is now an Italian restaurant) and the Lapin Agile (the cottage-cabaret famous from Utrillo's paintings, birthplace of cubism, still offers "Poèmes et Chansons" in the small hours of the morning), to Paris's own little hillside vineyard.

They have repaved and replanted the Place du Tertre, temporarily displacing the portrait painters and silhouette cutters who swarm in the side streets waiting to reclaim their traditional workplace. A Peruvian band performed on the steps of Sacré-Coeur and in the café, artists parked their sketch-pads by the door while they took time out for coffee.

Even a short walk from our hotel underlined the vital difference of Paris. Parisians queue for bread not, as in Moscow, because it is in short supply, nor, as in London, because shop staff are slow and surly. At Poilâne, 8 rue du Cherche-Midi, just behind the Hôtel Lutetia, people from all over Paris stand in line down the street simply because the bread baked there is so delicious. At 37 rue d'Assas, Christian Constant's sorbets and biscuits are a lesson in legerdemain, the chocolate and banana tart a masterpiece acknowledged by artists (including Sonia Rykiel, who gave the Lutetia its present art deco decor).

At Au Bell Viandier, the tiny butchers' shop at 25 rue du Vieux-Colombier, I watched housewives choosing meat and poultry from a choice that put vast supermarkets to shame. In France food is prepared by experts and sold to customers who can tell good from bad. Tourists can share the benefit: choose your café or restaurant by the number of locals frequenting it, and you will not go wrong.

On that principle I chose to eat at Le Vieil Ecu, a small restaurant close to the Louvre which, as far as I can see, does not get into any guidebook. Quite possibly the soup of the day is always the same vegetable blend, but it was authentically correct, as was the choucroute maison. With coffee and a half-bottle of lightly chilled



Fun de siècle: Outside the Theatre du Vaudeville, by Jean Béraud (1849-1856), captures the elegant atmosphere of Parisian life a century ago — an atmosphere that still flourishes in the city of light

beaujolais, a three-course meal came to £12.90, including service, in what might have been taken for a tourist trap. The restaurant claims, you see, to be part of the former home of Charles de Batz, Count of Artois, and even suggests on its table-covers that it was on the strength of a meal in this dining-room that Alexandre Dumas chose to team D'Artagnan with The Three Musketeers.

You get a better class of busker in Paris. In one of our Métro carriages a gypsy girl sang with the husky intensity of Juliette Greco. At stations we also had Beethoven violin sonata at Concorde, and a 13-piece chamber orchestra playing Mozart in the corridors of Châtelet.

With replicas on show in the Louvre station, the declaration of the rights of man spelt out at Concorde, exhibitions mounted in display cases at several other stops, and a bold new yellow and green colour scheme at Assemblée Nationale (formerly Chambre des Députés), a Métro ride becomes quite an artistic experience.

Thus encouraged, I set out to break the British national record for art appreciation, with a day-long assault course touring the

Musée d'Orsay (Manet, Miller, the Impressionists), the Louvre (Corot, Watteau, Géricault), the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Lalique, Dubuffet, Jeanne Lanvin's boudoir and bathroom), and the Louvre des Antiquaires (250 antique shops and art galleries and an exhibition hall all under one roof), finishing with a late afternoon run to the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires out in the Bois de Boulogne (inter-war posters, Mistinguett's shoes, and Chevalier's boxer).

For those who prefer an artistic sprint to such a cultural marathon, the Louvre individually signposts its biggest attractions — the Mona Lisa, Venus de Milo and Michelangelo's Slaves. Da Vinci's puzzling little painting of the woman with the quizzical smile is about to be displaced while work continues on the restoration of Veronese's *Wedding at Cana*, but I calculate that at present the hurrying visitor who did not lose his way could see all three, and the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, within a quarter of an hour.

Vital visits for those who have not been before are the Rodin museum in the rue de Varenne and the Marmottin, which recently retrieved nine stolen pictures

after five years' absence, including Monet's *Soleil Levant*, the picture which gave Impressionism its name. Now it is on display again, among the water lilies and vibrant Giverny garden views.

Meanwhile my wife, who knows what she likes (and it is not galloping from one gallery to another), returned to her favourite, which is the Picasso museum in the Marais. The joyful inventiveness of his sculptures, assembled old baskets, jugs, cake moulds, bike saddles and toy cars, always makes her laugh.

Afterwards, for serenity, she went back to the Hôtel de Clugny, to stand amid the perfect allegorical elegances of the 16th-century Lady and the Unicorn tapestries, rich, tranquil and enigmatic and, for nostalgia's sake, treated herself to an inexpensive cous-cous at a nearby restaurant.

The next morning, while my wife trawled the boutiques and bookshops of the 6th arrondissement, discovering that in eclectic France you can still buy English-language books which are unavailable in England, I walked to the Luxembourg gardens. Fountains played in the gar-

dens' half-frozen boating lake. People sat in the winter sun beneath the walls of the orangery reading their papers and books, men played *petanque* on the gravel, and crocodiles of school-children filed past, singing as they went. It was one of those great French films come to life.

Unchanging though they seem, Paris parks are full of novelties. The surprises to be found in the Luxembourg gardens include an impeccably tended orchard and a collection of beehives where Parisians come for gardening lessons and bee-keeping classes; a marionette theatre presenting wonderfully childish melodramas; and a battered little merry-go-round designed and built by Charles Garnier, whose more grandiose works include the Paris Opéra.

The sumptuous magnificence of that building has to be seen to be believed, but for the present the Opéra Salle Garnier stages only ballet, opera having been decanted to Paris's state-of-the-art new opera house at the Bastille, where productions benefit from all the technology and backstage facilities Covent Garden lacks.

Within walking distance of the hotel, though, we had two great churches. The great organ of Saint-Sulpice is familiar from broadcasts on Radio 3, yet mightier far when heard *in situ*. Val-de-Grâce, monastery turned military hospital up toward the Observatory, is also the home of Paris's Gregorian choir. Between them the two gave us a magnificently musical Sunday for nothing more than collection money.

Newcomers to Paris should certainly take the *bateaux-mouches* trip on the Seine. Having done that before, we took a three-hour boat excursion from the Musée d'Orsay to the Canal St Martin instead. The boat still passes the highlights of the Seine cruise, the Louvre, Notre-Dame and the Ile St-Louis before entering the canal, and then glides through an eerie tunnel which passes directly beneath the column in the centre of the Place de la Bastille.

After that the boat climbs through old locks, past swing bridges and the precariously maintained facade of the Hôtel du Nord, to the ingenious levitating bridge, Pont Crémier, and finally berths at the Parc de la Villette, with its huge science museum and futurist cinema housed in an oversized shiny ball-bearing.

We had one other reason for choosing Paris as our destination.

In her salad days my wife did not subsist entirely on salads. She was, instead, a valued customer at Lasserre, one of the most traditional of the great Paris restaurants. As such she was elected to the Club de la Casserole, an honour she shares with various presidents, artists and other greedy-guns. Each year, she and her fellow members have received an offer of a free bottle of champagne if they eat chez Lasserre in January. We had never found the opportunity to be in Paris in January before, but this year we were there to collect.

Walters swarmed. Aromas of truffle and *foie gras* wafted. The painted ceiling slid open to release cigar smoke to the still night air and the stars, and it was the Paris one dreamed of. It has not changed. It has only got better.



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CLONE SHARKS

Lynne Truss gets an extra television dose of double vision involving one Patricia Hodge, two Esther Rantzen, four American teenagers, an etiquette consultant and a pair of mug trees

Page 3

MONKEY NUTS

Frances Bissell, *The Times* cook, anticipates next Wednesday's Chinese new year celebrations with a Cantonese feast that is almost as easy to do in Hull as it is in Hong Kong

Page 6

SHROPSHIRE LAD

A.E. Housman's reputation was made with *A Shropshire Lad*. Book in hand, the writer and MP Julian Critchley explores the blue remembered hills in the south of the county

Page 10

Entertainment: Musical improvisation, or making it up as you go Page 5 Children: Juniors take to the ice for hockey Page 8 Property: A self-build dream turns sour Page 15

Going to work on an egg

REVIEW



A faraway twang of collapsed fantasy is

all part of a reviewer's week.
Lynne Truss writes

The desert, of course, can play funny tricks on the mind. Two weeks ago I was sitting in a motel cabin in Arizona, listening to the moan and whistle of a cold, dry desert wind... and I saw, or thought I saw, one of the most alarming bits of cheap studio-audience TV of my entire life. I blinked my bloodshot eyes; my ears cracked; it seemed to be real. When it was over, I crawled to the set and turned it off. It will be a long time before I venture into a great, empty Ansel Adams landscape again, if this is the sort of thing that happens.

It was a morning show in which four American mothers presented their teenage daughters to the viewing public. One of the daughters was named Sky, which added to the unreality. The subject of the show was obnoxious teenage behaviour, as evidenced by these girls' exaggerated gum-chewing, loud-mouthed interruptions and irrational refusal to wear anything fashioned from spotted chiffon (or purchased by Mom).

"Sky spits on the sidewalk," said Sky's mother. "I do not," shouted Sky. "I spit on the grass." "You spit on the sidewalk!" "I spit on the grass!" "She spits on the sidewalk." "I don't."

Anyway, she certainly spits somewhere, because she did it in the studio. This did not win sympathy from the audience, who hissed their disapproval, like a resolute lynch-mob. In the prayer-meeting tradition of such programmes, members of the audience would stand and bear witness with such enlightened comments as "If I were your mother, I would buy you a muzzle."

But then, out of nowhere, sprang a red-suited "etiquette consultant", who took the four girls backstage. What would she do to them? Would they reappear wearing choke-chains? Would the etiquette consultant tame them with a whip and chair?

No, it was worse than that. When the four girls re-emerged they were wearing off-the-shoulder party frocks, thick make-up and dainty pumps. Their hair had been crimped and pearly earrings affixed to the sides of their heads. As for their chewing gum — well, it had been either confiscated or sucked inside their evening gloves for safe-keeping. One by one, they minced on to the stage amid gasps of wonder.

"Do you like it?" each was asked. "Gee, I do," said three (including Sky), quietly and without spitting. "How did I do it?" asked the



Two-way stretch: a tight budget thwarted Brian Cox's attempt to create visual doubles of Patricia Hodge in *The Cloning of Joanna May*

etiquette consultant, brightly. "I could see that they just wanted to be different. So I told them, this is different." And as she said the words, it was suddenly horribly clear that the four, sweet little Barbie dolls looked virtually identical. The audience went wild.

I mention all this partly because I needed to get it off my chest, and partly because last Sunday saw the first part of Fay Weldon's *The Cloning of Joanna May* (TV, Sunday), a nifty British tale that describes a similarly cynical manufacture of non-individual beauty.

In Weldon's story, a flint-hearted, power-mad nuclear scientist (Brian Cox) applies the principle of atomic fission to human genetics and produces clones of his beautiful ex-wife (Patricia Hodge) after robbing her ovaries. He goes to work on an egg, as you might say. Any faint quibbles about the available technology he breezily sweeps aside by declaring that money can buy anything. It is a tribute to the atmosphere of the piece that, for a moment, you actually believe him.

But then the "clones" come along and the fantasy collapses. The suspension of disbelief snaps audibly, with a melancholy, faraway twang (like the famous sound-effect in *The Cherry Orchard*). Alas, the money available to director Philip Saville did not stretch to the cloning of Patricia Hodge. Thus, Joanna May's clones — being played by actresses

with faces all their own — look nothing like her. It is hard to know how to approach the second episode, armed with this knowledge. *The Kather Hopeless Approximation of Joanna May* somehow lacks the pulling power.

Nevertheless, the point was made: what better revenge on anybody than to rob them of their individuality (literally, of their undividedness)? What more scary notion than the manufacture of people, so that they're all made out of ticky-tacky and they all look just the same? The megalomaniac is in love with a unique beauty, but he must own it — so he destroys its singularity.

Interesting, by the way, that in Joanna May, as well as in *Life and Loves of a She Devil*, it is Patricia Hodge that everyone wants to look like. Personally, I think she's lovely, but some people can't stick her.

Interesting, too, that the first instalment of BBC2's cute terminus slot *Talking to Myself* (Thursday) should involve the cloning of Esther Rantzen. You couldn't blame this one on the desert wind: there were definitely two Esthers in the studio, swapping simpers back and forth, and making that famous smile that says "I know what you're going to say, and honestly I won't laugh." It was so frightening. What they talked about I couldn't tell you (something about Childline?). The

only thing that mattered — and it mattered urgently — was that this spillage of genetic material be mopped up sharply, before it got into the wrong hands.

What will be the fate of Joanna May's "clones"? I suspect a lesson in nature-versus-nurture is on the cards. Given their different environments, the clones have become distinctly individual people. Do they spit on the sidewalk? It's possible. No doubt their tastes in interior design will turn out to be strikingly divergent. If BBC2's excellent *Signs of the Times* (Sunday) has taught us anything.

"She likes white lino."

"Well, that's better than liking chintzy four-frou."

"Good grief, now she's put *The Hay Wain* up again!"

"Honestly, she's no clone of mine."

Signs of the Times is pure television: its clear, calm presentation of people talking with immense pride about their homes — seemingly attaching every scrap of their self-worth to their choice of Dulux — has in a short time become essential viewing. Leaving aside how wittily the series has been filmed and edited (producer Nicholas Barker), the appeal is that it is beautifully open-ended. Viewers must conclude for themselves that taste is a phenomenon there is literally no accounting for. A couple are shown engaged in slow-motion bickering. The issue is a mug-tree (one of those wooden

things you hang mugs from). The man, you see, was in love with a red mug-tree, but his girlfriend silently substituted a more tasteful replica in natural pine. The camera shows us both mug-trees, which assume an air of innocence. Yet to the bickering couple the day of the mug-tree has become equivalent to the gunshot at Sarajevo. The red looked naïf in a coffee-and-cream kitchen, averts the woman. But the pine-tree is too anonymous, argues the man.

In such a context, good taste becomes a purely relative concept. The real issue, to my mind, is the sad inadequacy of interior design as a means of expressing the essential you. People keep saying, "I think this room is really me" — and of course it is not. It is a page from *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*, or a setting from the Habitat catalogue.

Happening to pass John Lewis's window after watching *Signs of the Times*, I found that innocuous home furnishings leapt to the eye with a bizarre new quality. Here were nice chintz fabrics, plant stands, framed mirrors — each item cunningly designed to appeal to a purchaser's sense of personal taste, yet clearly manufactured to suit a lowest common denominator. It's the etiquette consultant all over again: let's the clone trap. You want to be different? Well, this is different. And we're all made out of ticky-tacky and we all look just the same.

Off with all their heads

PREVIEW

Screen Two: The Count of Solar

(Tomorrow, BBC2, 10.10pm)
David Nokes, co-adaptor of last year's *Clarissa*, wrote the screenplay for this remarkable story of pre-revolutionary France, in which *The Enigma of Kasper Hauser* meets *The Return of Martin Guerre*. A young deaf-mute boy is found wandering the countryside; he is educated in sign language by the Abbé de l'Épée (played by David Calder), and then starts to claim he is an aristocrat — viz, the Count of Solar. Given that the tumbrels impatiently await anyone with a fancy title, there is a certain historical irony here. Anyway, a trial ensues, with intrigue. The director is Tristram Powell, who years ago directed Nokes's film about Jonathan Swift, *No Country for Old Men*.

Bye Bye Columbus

(Monday, BBC2, 9pm)
Why does this offering from Peter Barnes seem so much like a radio play? Could it be the motif of the talking parrot? Anyway, Daniel Massey plays the rheumy-eyed, grizzle-cheeked Columbus (in funny nightcap, like Salieri in *Amadeus*), looking back on his far from noble adventures on the seas. The style is "literate" (i.e. studio-bound and cheery), and the subsidiary acting is highly camped up — Harriet Walter as Queen Isabella staring so fanatically that it's as though her eyelids had been stapled back against her will. The wise sayings of the parrot have been dubbed, so why are they so difficult to make out?

First Tuesday: Subway City

(Tuesday, ITV, 10.40pm)
There's nothing wrong with the subway, says a resilient 90-year-old New Yorker in Tuesday's film: "It's the people you've got to watch." Presumably he would also say there is nothing intrinsically dangerous about snorkelling in a piranha tank. If only something could be done about the fish. Nick Lord's film gives us the full swinging experience of New York's underground sub-culture —

as described by shoe-shine boys, cleaning squads, subway cops — and generally confirms one's suspicion that a piranha tank might be a less agitating environment.

Elizabeth R

(Thursday, BBC1, 8pm)
Forty years without a break, that's what they keep saying. But what does this mean: "without a break"? How can anyone take a breather from being Queen? Anyway, Edward Mirzoeff, veteran *Forty Minutes* editor, filmed the Queen over the period of her fortieth year, getting behind the scenes of lots of head-of-state engagements, and showing the desk-bound monarch sorting through the famous red boxes. The style of the resultant film, we are told, is intimate and relaxed; and we are assured that the palace has not exercised undue control over the material. So good luck to it, then. In the book that accompanies the film, however, there is a photo of the Queen choosing carpets and curtains for Holyroodhouse, each of the swatches being a subtly different shade of crimson. Surely a striking image for the range of editorial nuance available to a royal documentary maker?

Late Night Love: Call of the Wild

(Thursday, Channel 4, 12.05am)
A repeat showing of Ann Lurie's enjoyable 80-minute film about Alaska Men — a magazine and video-dating service dedicated to rectifying the chronic woman shortage in the USA's northernmost state. Of course, *Alaska Men* gushes with crude success — because there is a corresponding dearth of "men" everywhere else. Is this God's way of telling us He has a sense of humour? Anyway, the adverts ("Hi, I'm Dan and I look like a lumberjack") can elicit as many as 2,000 responses from American women searching for protective, sensitive males in peaked caps.

L.T.

The novelist that time forgot

Next Wednesday *Bookmark* on BBC2 profiles Henry Green, best-selling author and recluse

Henry Graham Greene was born in 1904, Henry Green in 1905. Like his near-namesake, the latter was a novelist who flirted with nihilism and enjoyed ricocheting between high life and low life. He, too, shied away from publicity and so acquired a certain mystique as an "enigma". In the 1940s and 1950s the reputation of the author of *Loving* (Green) was on a par with that of the author of *The Heart of the Matter* (Greene).

Graham Greene — who wisely dropped his first name — went on to win worldwide fame. Through his involvement in the cinema, his work fed into popular culture. Other writers, notably John le Carré, acquired time-shares in Greenland, reworking his characteristic ambience for their own fiction. The novels and story collections are on sale in W. H. Smith, on the same shelf as Frederick Forsyth and Jack Higgins.

Green's books, on the other hand, are mostly out of print. His pitiless narratives do not lend themselves to adaptation for the big or small screen and he has no literary heirs. Despite any number of admiring testimonials from fellow authors — Evelyn Waugh to John Updike — he is now virtually forgotten.

Wednesday's *Bookmark* documentary, *Trapped* (BBC2 8.10-9pm), asks how we could have forgotten him so rapidly and explores the novelist's decline from the debonair figure of wartime to the unkempt recluse of later years — who published no further fiction between 1952 and his death in 1973.

Roger Thompson, the director, avoids interviewing critics or the

surviving authors of Green's generation, preferring the recollections of business colleagues, former girlfriends, the barmaid at his local in Knightsbridge, central London, and his son Sebastian ("he spent his whole life giving up things — his family, his friends, billiards, fishing — until finally he almost gave up life itself").

The result is that rarity, a TV documentary that is the first biography of its subject — as opposed to the biofilm that piggy-backs on the work of others. Now fortnightly, *Bookmark* has an overall run of 12 programmes in 1991-92, with a puny average budget of £64,000.

"BBC Enterprises tell us it's very difficult to sell anything to do with books," Mr Thompson says. "Even though a film we did about Vaclav Havel was bought by a number of countries, writers are seen as a poor investment, compared to performers, movie directors or composers."

"Sometimes we wonder if we ought to change the title. But the positive side is that you have enormous freedom if nobody else is involved. There's a feeling around that some of the programmes *Omni* makes are inhibited by the deals they have to do."



Rarity: Henry Green captured by photographer Cecil Beaton

The Channel 4 show received a critical hammering last year, partly as a result of its gimmick (condemned by Bernard Levin in *The Times*) of incinerating books disliked by its reviewers.

Stuart Cosgrove, the producer, insists the burnings were simulated ("the most we did was to singe the jacket of a biography of Dave Allen") and that the second series will see improvements.

"Last time was really just a trial run," he says. "We've now got more status, as an evening programme, and more money. So we've rejigged it quite substantially."

TV programmes about books (and author profiles in general arts series) have two puzzling features. The first, ironically, is that literary appreciation or analysis actually makes authors rather bored and fidgety.

Burning Books deals with "issues", and its roving camera skips impatiently from table to table, giving each text only a few minutes' attention. *Bookmark* tends to focus on writers rather than writing and rarely engages in critical assessment. The argument, of course, is that the life illuminates the work; but the reading of selected passages by an actor scarcely does justice to the latter.

JOHN DUGDALE

Up and under the mike

When England's rugby team meets Ireland today, Rs will roll

When MacLaren was seen lunching with ITV executives after the commercial channel, horror of horrors, secured last year's rugby World Cup, The BBC is the traditional home of both rugby and MacLaren so it was treble all round when the grrreat man agreed to do the World Cup for radio in exchange for a tasty contract this year.

If this is a big year for BBC rugby coverage it is just as big a year for rugby union itself. Soon, the players will be paid. Gracious no, not paid to play rugby and not paid to talk about rugby, but paid for anything they do in their capacity as rugby players which is not directly connected with rugby. Oh go on, it makes perfect sense.

What the revolution actually means is that if the Bridlington Rotary Club is looking for someone to speak on the Ruritanian potato famine of 1923, they will naturally send for Rob Andrew or Will Carling. If you can imagine John Major giving up his prime ministerial salary and instead being paid to watch cricket you have got the general idea.

One can see the financial need.

though. When England finished as losing finalists in the World Cup everyone said that here was the basis of a team that would flatten all in sight over the next few years. Only trouble being, half the team have either retired or decided to concentrate on business because they can't afford to play rugby any more. This is a neat inversion of the received recession wisdom, which is that businessmen can't afford to do business any more: all they can afford to do is play golf.

The key thing to look out for this afternoon is how many interviews there are during and after the games (Wales against France will be shown in highlight form after the England game). Time was when the BBC thought interviewing rugby players was not quite the done thing old boy, but in the World Cup ITV showed no such inhibitions.

But the World Cup did demonstrate that rugby players are often more interesting than footballers. Hardly any of them seem to be called Brian and not one player was even half as sick as a parrot throughout the tournament.

It remains to be seen whether there are any good after dinner jokes about rugby. I did hear one this week about an England team that passed the ball instead of kicking it, but that sounds too far-fetched.

PETER BARNARD

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Virtuosity that thrives on the spur of the moment

When music companies issue recordings from the past, they often do so in a spirit of cheap nostalgia. But a recent and striking exception to the back catalogue cash-in syndrome has been the release of *Infrared Roses*. This collection of 12 improvisations, all of them unpremeditated, was drawn from concerts given by one of rock's oldest and boldest fixtures, the Grateful Dead.

To Dead-heads — the army of devoted fans that follows the band from city to city — this section of the show, when the song structures are abandoned and music is created on the spot, is central to their appreciation. During *On The Edge*, a four-part Channel 4 television series which begins tomorrow, Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia explains why the improvisational element of the music is so important, both to the fans and the band.

"What we're doing here," says Garcia, relaxing in his Marin County home in California, "is inventing this as we go along. You are involved in this experience and it's never going to be this way again. There's value to that and I think our audience is the proof of it. There are people who come back to every performance. If we do ten days somewhere, a lot of them will be back every night."

According to *Forbes Magazine*, the Grateful Dead earned \$33 million for their performances between 1989 and 1991. This prodigious feat elevated them to number 20 among the world's top earning entertainers. Such a high level of popular recognition is almost unheard of among musicians who feature improvisation so prominently.

Improvisation lies at the heart of so much of the world's music. Yet we still regard it with suspicion, often treating it as a poor relation of composing and down-playing its significance. *On The Edge* scrutinises our mistrust, opening up the nuts and bolts of improvisation as it is practised, or avoided, in a wide variety of musical forms. Directed by Jeremy Marre, a film-maker whose music documentaries are consistently challenging and entertaining, the series was inspired originally by a book written in 1980 by guitarist Derek Bailey.

Improvisation has now been revised for a second edition, to coincide with the series. As a guitarist, Bailey has devoted himself to pure improvisation since the late 1960s. Originally a commercial player, who accompanied anybody from Bob Monkhouse to the Supremes, he has rigorously avoided any connection with his past

Is improvisation, considered an essential skill in Mozart's day, excluded from our play-safe musical world? David Toop goes in search of spontaneous combustions



Spontaneity brings rewards: Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead

life in dance halls, pit orchestras and cabaret clubs.

As he points out, "I make as much money playing the plinky-plonk stuff as I used to with the other stuff. If I'd carried on being a commercial musician, I would have been redundant. There would be some little piece of equipment doing what I was doing."

In the age of machines, compact discs, nostalgia and record company pressures for odds-on winners, improvisation has become a dirty word. One of the more out-spoken musicians featured in *On The Edge* is the classical pianist Robert Levin, filmed with the Academy of Ancient Music, which plays on 18th-century instruments or exact copies of them. Levin laments the eradication of improvisation from performances of music by composers such as Mozart, who

actually invited and encouraged the practice.

Music industry demands for standardisation are certainly to blame, he maintains, since the studio performances can be spliced together from a number of "takes". Improvisation may lead a musician into flights of fancy which cannot be matched for the final, supposedly perfect version. "You might get so carried away by what you are doing," said Levin, "that you might play a few wrong notes. Our society has lionised predictable performance in just the same way that it has lionised a certain standard in shoe polish or toothpaste. We want things that are reliable."

Relegated to the "stuck 'em high" economics of toothpaste selling, music seems a frail and useless thing. The more unpredictable it becomes,

the more useless it can seem. Yet improvisation thrives. *On The Edge* leapfrogs across Indian vocal music, country music session players in Nashville, Spanish flamenco dancing, Gaelic psalms in the Hebrides, and spirit ceremonies in Zimbabwe.

Jazz drummer Max Roach, who played bebop alongside Charlie Parker in the 1940s, hosts a percussion workshop with children in Harlem: New York saxophonist John Zorn conducts a frenetic, psychologically revealing improvisation game called "Cobra"; the organist of the Sacre Coeur in Paris, Naji Hakim, explains the spiritual significance of improvisation, while Chicago blues guitarist, Buddy Guy, reveals the flexible relationship between his intense playing and the infinite variety of audience reactions he encounters in clubs and concert halls around the world.

Musical sounds, cultural differences and performance styles could hardly be greater, yet all of these musicians speak a common language. Improvisation is the life blood of their art, they agree. The rules, whether blues chord changes or Indian ragas, are an empty matrix without the creative or subversive inventions of improvisation.

Few people enjoy surprises, despite the world being full of them. Even worse, from the point of view of improvisers, is the fact that their best work is often transient. As the great jazz saxophonist and flautist, Eric Dolphy, once said, shortly before his death: "When you hear music, it's over and gone in the air. You can never capture it again."

For the music business, live performance frequently becomes merely a means of promoting recordings. Levin regards this attitude as a pernicious influence on our listening habits. When compact discs present us with the illusion of perfection, what happens when we hear inspired but imperfect performances?

Equally, we might turn the entire and-improvisation syndrome on its head. "It's really a pity that I have a CD player at home," Levin imagines people saying to themselves. "I have to listen to the same silly thing all the time and not have the sense that I experienced a performance belonging only to me, to be treasured forever, or be exchanged for another which I treasure even more, but which is as fragile as this music ought to be."

On The Edge will be transmitted by Channel 4 in four parts on Sundays at 8.30, beginning tomorrow



Improvisation as a frenetic and revealing game: New York saxophonist John Zorn

Tragic sense of emptiness

OPERA

Königskinder
Coliseum

SO MUCH sweet tragedy hangs in the air. There is of course the poignancy of the long protracted death of the kindly children themselves. "The Prince and the Goosegirl" as they are in the alternative title that English National Opera have given this production of Humperdinck's fairytale opera. Then there is perhaps the sense of waste one may feel that the piece has been allowed to gather dust for so long. But most of all there is the tragedy of characters caught up in a world that consists entirely of shadows and echoes from somewhere else: to be precise, from Bayreuth. This, more than anything else, seems to be the reason for their extinction. There is no way out. At

every turn a harmonic progression, or a melodic shape, or an instrumental effect tells them that they do not exist, that they are vapours left on the stage after *Siegfried*, *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger*.

Königskinder is not something to be dismissed, therefore, as Humperdinck's "other" opera. The orchestral lushness is the same, as Mark Elder shows in a generally warm performance, even though there are uncomfortable problems when the string writing goes into filigree of solo figuration. But this later opera does not have the firm rooting in folk-song, in jaunty simple hums and whistles, that makes *Hansel and Gretel* such an unexpected and special achievement. It is altogether more airy, and perhaps indeed one would have to say more airy-fairy.

One of the essays in the programme book suggests that the author of the original play, Elsa Bernstein, has been



Cathryn Pope as the Goosegirl: altogether a fairy being

neglected on grounds of sex. But this seems unlikely. Her work falls into a tradition of fairy plays, along with those of Maeterlinck and Hauptmann for instance, that have all plummeted, except where they have been borne up by an exceptional score, as of course is the case with the Maeterlinck-Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*. That work, not *Hansel*, provides the pattern for understanding and judging Königskinder, as one would surely realise even without Cathryn Pope providing an evident link in making the Goosegirl as nervily icy, beautiful, magical and vul-

nerable as her Mélisande of little more than a year ago. And by comparison with Debussy's opera, this piece almost fades away. It does, however, provide opportunities for a great deal of visual charm in the outer acts (with extended intervals for scene changes, this is a long evening), and for a number of effective character sketches. Sue Blane's set for the first act is an inviting box of wild wood, mostly in natural shades of ochre and green, but adapting to some entrancing changes in Paul Pyant's lighting. Then the final snowscape suggests a

giant dust sheet, a potent image of emptiness, with the monochrome for the juvenile Liebestod broken only by the cascading flame of the Goosegirl's Rossetti hair.

Pope's singing combines the ice and the flame of her look and demeanour: she is altogether, a fairy being, a stranger, with her voice adding to the impression of weightlessness she conveys by the way she moves. Opposite her as the Prince, Joseph Evans is someone with his feet far more decisively planted, as is appropriate to the part. There is nothing fancy about his singing, but it comes with an appealing freshness and strength, and it keeps coming, for he has a lot to do. Not so Sally Burgess as the Witch, which is a pity when she is so devilish cunning and seductive. There are fine cameos too from Alan Opie, Richard Angas and Eric Shilling.

However, the lederhosen vulgarity of the middle act and the unwarranted final gesture suggest that David Pountney as director does not quite know whether to believe in the piece, or how to couch his disbelief.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

Riches recalled

JAZZ RECORDS

Miriam Makeba: *Africa*
(RCA/Novus ND83155)

was unfair, and it certainly cannot be applied to this compilation. While they may be gentle, Makeba's rich vocal harmonies are never in danger of lapsing into easy listening. *Africa* shows her at the peak of her form. It is worth hearing in conjunction with last year's *Drum: South African Jazz and Jive*, an assortment of Fifties performers — including Makeba.

Makeba's former husband, Hugh Masekela, collaborates on many of the arrangements. The starker settings are the more evocative. Politics and the rituals of ordinary life are mingled in the chants of songs such as "Khwuleza". It is heartening that the anti-Verwoerd song "Nodumnyama" can now be thought of as a relic.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Humphrey Carpenter on Enid Bylton, in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow

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Chinese monkey business

DIANA LEADSETTER

If you live in or near a city with a sizeable Chinese community, this is the week to make a shopping trip to experience the thrill and bustle of the preparations, particularly the culinary ones, for Chinese new year, which is next Wednesday.

This is my favourite time of year to be in Hong Kong, shopping with my sister-in-law in Wanchai's street markets. We buy Chinese wind-dried sausages, called *ap cheung*, from the shop that sells all manner of dried foods, barbecued pork and spare ribs. The sausages and barbecued pork will be added to the fried rice, which will form part of the evening meal. The spare ribs will be cooked in a homely 'haiky' cucumber stew.

For fish, it is difficult to choose between the pearly, mottled squid and the groupers swimming in a tank. We choose a grouper steamed with ginger, garlic and spring onions for flavouring. It will be the highlight of a true Cantonese meal.

We will have vegetables, too, perhaps stir-fried broccoli, or the Chinese leaves and mangetout dish described below. I shall probably want to include the shrimp-stuffed mushrooms, which I learnt to make with Chan Fat Chee, the chef at the Pung Lum in Shatin. He is an excellent teacher. I was fascinated to watch how he used his fist as a piping bag, taking a handful of the shrimp paste and squirting it neatly into the mushroom caps, first adding that all-important dab of cornflour to hold mushroom and filling together.

After our food shopping, we might buy some auspicious flowers or even a small orange tree for the balcony. Perhaps some red and gold, new year decorations and the traditional *lai see* or red packets in which to tuck a crisp new banknote or two for the children.

The pungent smell of dried fish mingling with those of barbecued meats; the smell of fresh oranges tempered by a compound spiciness coming from the herbal medicine shop. What an appetite it induces. Is it to be dim sum and tea at one of the large bustling restaurants in Hong Kong Central, or is it to be the quiet haven of one of the fine hotel restaurants?

You do not need to travel to Hong Kong to appreciate all these good things. Oriental food shops are to be found in many of our large cities.



Welcome the year of the monkey with The

Times cook, Frances Bissell, in Cantonese mood

London's Soho will yield all you need for a Year of the Monkey banquet. Any number of restaurants in Gerrard Street and Shaftesbury Avenue will provide authentic tea and dim sum. The Mayflower, whose owner Patrick Tsang is from Shatin, turns out truly authentic Cantonese dishes, such as fried milk. The scallops in deep-fried taro crust are as good as any I have had anywhere. To experience the calm of a fine oriental dining-room, try the restaurant at The Dorchester, which serves shark fin, abalone and roast pigeon.

Some of the following recipes I have learnt from Chinese cooks and chefs, some are simply based on the ingredients I like to use in my kitchen. The Eight Treasure cake recipe, for example, is based on the English fruit cake, but uses dried tropical fruit, which you can buy in health food stores. It is extraordinarily good. The number eight is very lucky in Chinese numerology.

My recipe below is a crisp, cooling combination. Melon partners cold, cooked meats very well. Arrange a bed of salad leaves on the plates first, if you wish.

Chicken and melon salad with warm sesame dressing
(serves 6)

- 3x5oz/140g skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 1 small honeydew melon
- 2tbsp sesame seeds
- 3tbsp sunflower oil
- 1tbsp rice vinegar
- 2tbsp shredded ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 2tbsp toasted sesame oil

Poach or steam the chicken for eight minutes. When cool enough to handle, slice and arrange the slices on plates, alternating with slices of melon, or put a fan of chicken slices to one side of the

plate and a fan of melon slices on the other. In a small heavy frying pan, toast the sesame seeds until golden brown. Scatter them over the chicken and melon. In the same pan, mix all the ingredients except the sesame oil, bring to the boil, remove from the heat, stir in the sesame oil and spoon over the salad. Serve immediately.

FOR the following recipe, you can change the flavourings if you wish, adding coriander leaves, star anise or dried tangerine peel. A small cod, hake, grise (small salmon) or trout in season, sea bass, grey mullet or grouper can be cooked in this way.

Steamed fish
(serves 6)

- 2½-3lb/1.10-1.35kg round fish, gutted but with whole head intact
- 1 bunch spring onions or baby leeks
- 2in/5cm piece fresh ginger
- 2-3 cloves of garlic
- 3tbsp soy sauce
- 2tbsp good dry sherry or rice wine
- 1tbsp toasted sesame oil

Rinse and dry the fish thoroughly. Wash the spring onions or baby leeks, cut off the roots and remove the tops and outer skin if necessary. Split them lengthways and lay half of them on an oval plate or dish large enough to take the fish and of a size to fit your steamer. Peel and thinly slice the ginger and garlic, lay a few slices on top of the spring onions and a few slices in the fish. Put the fish in the dish and sprinkle the remaining ginger and garlic on top. Cover with more spring onions. Pour over a table-spoon of soy sauce and place in a steamer. Steam for 8-12 minutes. Boil up the rest of the soy sauce and the sherry. Remove the fish from the steamer, uncover it, put the spring onions around. Pour the hot soy mixture over the fish and sprinkle on the sesame oil. Serve immediately.

THE mixture for the following recipe can also be used to stuff parboiled courgettes or small hollowed-out potatoes, which have been cooked until just tender. A mixture of shiitake, oyster and ordinary cap mushrooms would be delicious if you cannot get dried flower mushrooms. If you do use the latter, they should be soaked for 30 minutes, rinsed and then simmered for 15 minutes in stock, wine or water. Only raw prawns should be used.



Shrimp-stuffed mushrooms
(serves 4-6 as a starter)

- 18 mushrooms, about 1½in/4cm in diameter
- 2tbsp cornflour
- 1lb/455g raw prawns, shelled
- 1 egg white
- large pinch salt, small pinch pepper
- finely grated ginger and chopped chive or spring onion for garnish

Remove the stalks from the mushrooms and wipe them clean. Avoid washing them if possible. Sprinkle cornflour lightly over the inside of each mushroom cap. Put the shelled prawns, most of the egg white, the remaining cornflour, the salt and pepper in a food processor and process until you have a smooth paste.

Spoon the filling into each mushroom cap and smooth it over with a finger or thumb dipped into the egg white. Place in a steamer basket, and steam for eight minutes. Remove and garnish before serving.

USE courgettes or ordinary cucumbers in the following recipe as a substitute for hairy cucumber, or fuzzy melon as it is also called. Cooked cucumbers are very good, provided they are not overdone.

Cucumber and spare ribs
(serves 4)

- 8 dried Chinese mushrooms or 12 fresh shiitake mushrooms
- 6 medium-sized courgettes or 2 large cucumbers
- 1lb/455g pork spare ribs chops
- 1tbsp groundnut oil
- sea salt, black pepper

Soak the dried mushrooms in 500ml/16oz water for half an hour. If using the fresh mushrooms, poach them for five minutes in the same quantity of water. Drain and reserve the liquid. Slice the mushrooms. Peel the cucumber (scrub hairy cucumbers) or courgettes and cut into wedges. Dice the pork into small cubes. Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan and fry the pork until browned all over. Then add the vegetables. Cook for a couple of minutes and add half the mushroom liquid. Cook for a further minute or two, season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and serve immediately.

Steamed Chinese leaves and mangetouts
(serves 4)

- 1 head of Chinese leaves
- 3oz/85g mangetouts
- 2 star anise

Dressing

- 2tbsp each toasted sesame oil, soy sauce, brown sugar and rice vinegar

Remove any damaged outer leaves from the Chinese leaves. Top and tail the mangetouts. Shred the leaves across, mix them with the mangetouts and place them in a steamer basket with the star anise buried in the middle. Steam for five-eight minutes. Mix together the ingredients for the dressing, pour it into a serving bowl and toss the hot drained vegetables in it.

Eight treasures fruit cake
(fills 10in/25.5cm round or 9in/23cm square tin. Also fills two 1lb/455g approx 250g soufflé dishes)

- 12oz/340g unsalted butter, softened
- 12oz/340g light or dark muscovado sugar
- 14oz/400g plain flour
- 4 free range eggs
- grated rind and juice of ½ lemon
- 1tsp lemon oil (optional)
- 1tsp ground cinnamon
- 1tsp ground mixed spice
- 4tsp Chinese five-spice powder
- 4tsp ground cardamom
- 4tsp ground nutmeg
- 3lb/1.35kg dried fruit and nuts, using 8 from the following: sultanas, seedless raisins, pitted prunes, apricots,

cherries, cranberries, crystallised ginger, pecans, walnuts, almonds, papaya, mango, citron peel, sweet preserved lemons, limes or mandarins, bananas

½pt/70 ml amontillado sherry or shaoxing wine

Cream together the butter and sugar and, when soft and light, beat in the flour and eggs alternately. Stir in the rest of the ingredients. Spoon into ready-prepared cake tins lined with buttered greaseproof paper. Bake at 180C/350F, gas mark 4 in the middle of a preheated oven. The smaller cakes will bake in about 75 minutes. If baking a large cake, it will take 3½-4 hours. Reduce the heat to 150C/300F, gas mark 2 after two hours and cover with brown paper or foil to prevent the top from burning.

● Oriental suppliers - Birmingham: Wing Yip, 96-98 Coventry Street, B5 5NY (021-643 8987). Hull: Exotic Speciality Food, 20 Berkeley Street, HU1 1PR (0482 25236); also mail order. London: Wing Yip, 395 Edgware Road, Chiswick, WU2 6LN (081-450 0422), and many shops in Soho. Manchester: Wing Yip, Oldham Road, Ancoats, M4 5HU (061-832 3215). Oxford: Lung Wah Chong, 41-42 Hythe Bridge Street (0865 790703).

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A zest for the islands

Jane MacQuitty sings the praises of New Zealand's wines, so close to European hearts

New Zealand's crisp, light, aromatic white wines are as close as the new world is likely to get today to a European wine style. So close that intense, flavourful Kiwi sauvignon regularly beats the finest French versions from Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé at blind tastings in Britain and abroad.

Though it irritates the Australians like fury, the cool, temperate, maritime-influenced climate of their archipelago produces vital, verdant wines that are far closer to their European originals.

Britain's wine-drinkers have been slow to realise the potential and suitability of New Zealand wines: in 1981 we drank only 4,000 cases a year, but by 1991 we were drinking 200,000 cases (80 per cent up on 1990). New Zealand's sauvignon, especially the flowering, currant-like versions from Marlborough, the prime site on the northern tip of South Island, is the wine that has successfully wooed British drinkers. Montana blazed the trail, and others followed: Cloudy Bay's sauvignon is the sell-out, cult Marlborough bottle, here and in the Antipodes, but Hunter's, Palliser, Wairau River and Stoneleigh are also first-class sauvignon producers.

Sauvignon is the obvious New Zealand wine choice. But southern hemisphere chardonnay from this country displays real class and flavour too, with restrained, burgundy-like acidity and depth that escapes many of the turbo-charged Australian versions.

Anyone tasting a top-notch, rich, nutty, new oak-aged New Zealand chardonnay from Hawke's Bay, or the up and coming Marlborough region, both sited well north of Wellington on North Island, will know why. Again, it is the intense herbaceous underpinning and acidity stemming from New Zealand's climate that make these chardonnays so special.



Southern star: Marlborough is the prime NZ site on the northern tip of South Island

land's climate that make these chardonnays so special. For years, New Zealand's cabernet sauvignon-dominated reds lagged well behind the pace and class of the country's white wines. Cooler climate reds can be pale and lacklustre. New Zealand has taken time to realise that the best cabernet sauvignons of the world are those that follow Bordeaux's example and have been filled out by the merlot and cabernet franc grapes. Increased New Zealand vineyard plantings of these two varieties will further encourage this trend.

Already the Bordeaux inspired blends, particularly those of Hawke's Bay fruit, made by Villa Maria, Vidal, Vavasour, Corbous and Coopers Creek, show what can be achieved. Te Mata's impressive Coleraine Cabernet/Merlot from North Island was one of the pioneering Bordeaux blends, and at last now has some competition.

New Zealand's surprising expertise with the notoriously difficult to grow and vinify pinot noir grape was apparent back in 1983. Early excellent pinot noirs, made by Nobilo and St Helena, near Canterbury in the south of South Island, have been followed up particularly by the Marlborough Vineyard, whose winery near Wellington has produced consistently good examples.

In contrast to Europe's poor showing in 1991, everything seems to have gone right for the New Zealanders with their grape harvest, despite its late arrival. A cool spring reduced yields, but a long, hot autumn and a long growing season produced wines with unusual ripeness and maturity.

With so many 1991 European wine regions wiped out by severe spring frost, especially those of France, New Zealand's superior '91s have a tremendous opportunity here. Yet many New Zealand producers ignore the one UK wine category that will bring them fame and fortune: the £2.99 bottle. A dry, zesty, well-made Müller-Thurgau based blend at £2.99 would bring the 600,000 case sales New Zealand so desperately desires.

THE TIMES

Mock-heroic fantasyland

Jonathan Meades on how the old St George's Hospital has turned into a culinary dragon breathing expensive verbosity

Six weeks ago an article appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph* which may be said to have pushed back the boundaries of pretension in gastronomic writing. Its subject was the chef of The Lanesborough Hotel, his supposedly "British" menu, his sources, the nomenclature of the dishes etc. The dominant tone was that of forelock-tugging sycophancy: "After my privileged previews I see every reason for The Lanesborough to lead a long overdue return to the habit of eating in hotel restaurants."

But it was not so much the quasi-adventurous demeanour of the piece that caused me to cringe as a couple of specific epithets: "Norfolk duckling with a ragout (sic) of oysters and sweetbreads. Exactly right, but brave. Accurate, but acutely more courageous is Roasted Skate with lobster..." Brave? Courageous? What would the gifted poet who wrote this stuff pull out of his thesaurus were he required to describe someone who had performed an act of real bravery, of genuine courage?

One effect of coming into contact with such meretriciously devalued language is that of (quite unreasonable) antipathy towards the referent. But one must try to keep an open mind. You can't blame a hotel for the quality of its apologetic prose. Well, perhaps you can: there is something so excessive about The Lanesborough that it seems almost bound to foment hyperbole. It strives for grandeur and certainly achieves grandiosity. It is formidably expensive — the cheapest room is £190. You could probably set up an entire bistro for what a couple of its Empire sofas cost (but that is no doubt an impertinent measure).

The Lanesborough will, I imagine, be an object of greater curiosity to Londoners than most new hotels in this city for it occupies an indubitable landmark, the former St George's Hospital at Hyde Park Corner. It's a landmark by virtue of its position rather than on account of its architecture. I doubt that anyone would place it in the first division of Greek Revival buildings, though it is certainly more fully realised than the same architect's National Gallery (which the Catalan Ricardo Bofill, interviewed by the trustees apropos of the extension, said he would pull down in order to start from scratch. He didn't get the job). At St George's

Hospital, Messrs Lanesborough, who are American, have taken the very opposite route. They've gone the Prince Charles way. High quality repro and lots of it. Someone has looked long and pointedly at the Soane Museum. Someone else has been given an apparently open cheque. It is expected that clients will show up similarly equipped.

A problem with such full-blown replication is that its fantasy is mitigated by the very people who are paying for it, the punters. There is something irresistibly risible about a leisure-dressed resident from, say, Jeddah sitting nervously on a striped Napoleonic settee awaiting his date in thigh-boots. (If nothing else The Lanesborough may be an unwitting boon to the escort trade.) Of course, the staff fit into the fantasy. There are scores of them, formally got up, and appropriate to the surrounds: they know the rules of the charade. Maybe Brunell kit and Empire dresses should be provided for the punters. There are two restaurants. The Conservatory is vaguely oriental — a theatrical mix of the "Hindoo" manner of, say, Sezincore with the Raffles Hotel look. Its menu is doggedly miscegenary — the *ne plus ultra* of that idiom which flaunts the internationalism of its ingredients. Though it may be hard to believe, I don't eat in places which I'm pretty sure I'm going to dislike.

On the other hand, The Dining Room offers a menu which seems promising — if you can overlook the bravery and the courage, not to mention the whimsy and the prices. It's a handsome room, plastered, pink, very opulent (loads of gold) but horribly lit — the rest of the hotel's public rooms are bright. This is crepuscular.

The staff have their rituals. One is the prolix explanation of dishes which are fully described on the menu. A haddock mousse was unhappily talked up as having been "made many centuries ago in Scotland", and further qualified: "It is Mr Will Cartling's favourite." I imagine that Mr Jeff Probyn would thus consider it girls' food. There, too, is a lot of showy decanting, sniffing, to-ing and fro-ing with glasses — the thinking is probably that this will justify the outlandish mark-ups. A 1983 Clos de l'Arbalestier St Joseph sells for £38; it



retails for about a third of that sum.

The cooking is notionally British, apparently based in ancient recipes, reliant on spices. The actuality is that quintessential British dish, the curate's egg. Some of the stuff comes off, quite a bit of it doesn't. The presentation is unreflexively nouvelle cuisine-ish and seems more rooted in the recent tradition of international hotels than in the lost traditions of these islands. Having said which it is difficult to think of another kitchen which would serve the said dish of duck with oysters and sweetbreads. I may be wrong but this strikes me as the sort of wayward combination of ingredients that might once have been wrought by topographical exigency beside some estuary where there were oyster beds, wild ducks and salt marsh lambs; and where poor communications forced

people to make the best of what was locally available.

The flesh of such ducks might be assumed to already possess a fishy taste. Not so the fat quacker cooked here: standard issue pink breast, more thoroughly cooked (and lightly spiced) leg plus the jarring shredded oysters and bland sweetbreads. Brave? No, of course not — unless there is a subsidiary meaning that signifies pointless exhumation. A puck-sized pigeon pie (tender if underflavoured meat) was served with sweetish pickled cabbage and was OK. A "potage" of smoked oxtail was watery and the dumplings that floated in it were so tiny as to be tasteless — there is a persistent tendency towards dinkiness here: those favourites of nouvelle cuisine, undersized turnips, turned up with guinea fowl, and very bitter they were too. The meat,

in contrast, was bland, a potato cake soggy. Puddings have a bit more guts to them. Tea blanc-mange with various lumps of fruit covered in a tea-flavoured syrup was pleasantly smoky. And a bread and butter pudding along Mosimann lines was good. The courageous skate was not offered the night I dined; away at its investiture, very likely.

Anyone with a mind to discover what spice cooking can be like would be better advised to take a ferry to St Malo for the weekend and to eat at Robert Abraham's eponymous restaurant. You can, of course, wander round The Lanesborough for free.

The Dining Room
The Lanesborough Hotel,
Hyde Park Corner, London SW1
(071-259 5599).
Lunch, dinner every day. £110 plus.

JONATHAN MEADES'S RESTAURANT GUIDE

Marks — up to a maximum of ten — are awarded for cooking and although they are intended to reflect value for money they are not determined by this consideration alone: certain very costly restaurants are very good, certain very cheap ones are too. All prices given are approximate — they are for a three-course meal for two, including modest wine and an aperitif. Dishes are mentioned only as an indication of the repertoire. Never be afraid to complain. Phone first: it is not only discourteous but illegal to dishonour bookings: that goes for restaurants as well as customers.

ENGLISH COOKING

LONDON

L'Estimoteur

14 Garrick Street, WC2 (071-379 1432)
The son of French restaurant that is on the wane in France — bourgeois, comforting, devoid of pretension. The menu's conservatism is matched only by the kitchen's diligence. Simple dishes are cooked with the best ingredients and with absolute care. Warm Lyons sausage is served with potato salad, the house terrine is commendable, the salted herrings are deliciously oily, the *brochette* of pork and *petit sauté* with saffron rice is great stuff. Whiting is offered as a main course and so too are four cuts of first-class beef. Cheeses and wines are excellent, though there are too few of the latter. Puddings include chocolate art. Good service. £50-plus. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat.

L'Arlequin

123 Queenstown Road, SW8 (071-622 0555)
A restaurant that has always been pretty good has transformed itself into a great one. There are red wine sauces with bass and mullet, foie gras is served in massive portions with goose ham, the lamb is probably the best you'll ever taste, the sorbets and ice-creams are unbeatable, the nougat glass is amazing. Christian Delteil's stuffed cabbage raises that humble peasant dish to undreamed-of heights — it is one of the best dishes in Britain. The wines are impressive and aren't cheap. Mine Delteil runs the front of house with real aplomb; the monochromatic mint green decor is more restful than one might expect. £90 (£40 at lunchtime). Lunch and dinner Mon-Fri.

Simply Nice

44 Rochester Row, SW1 (071-630 8061)
Not the would-be bistro it used to be but, as the name suggests, a smooth outfit serving a repertoire of dishes derived from Chez Nico and simplified. Much of the stuff on offer is first rate — perfectly hung meat, duck confit, etc. — but the sauce is not up to Ladelin's own standard. The salads and the sweets are fine, too. Perfunctory wine list, efficient service, brilliant chips. £68-plus. Lunch and dinner Mon-Fri.

OUT OF TOWN

Morels

23-27 Lower Street, Heston, Surrey (0428 651462)
There can be few outfits where the punter must order with greater care. This is because Jean-Yves Morel cooks

in two contrasting modes: as a *charcutier* he is peerless and his *fromage de tête*, his duck *ballotine* with potatoes and some of his meat dishes are lovely. Also, his sampler plate of sweets is outstanding. But he also flies the flag of old-fashioned nouvelle cuisine: perversely weird. Codd nouvelle of shellfish and fowl crop up, certain dishes are meagrely portioned, his experiments with Thai herbs and spices produce questionable results. The service is formal yet amiable. On balance it's worth the risk. But do watch out. Set meals £18-£21 for three courses plus a half bottle of decent Côtes du Rhône per person are good deals. Lunch Tues-Fri, dinner Tues-Sat.

Le Pousin

The Courtyard, rear of 57 Brookley Road, Brockenhurst, Hants (0590 23063)
The service is smooth, the wines are first rate and the cooking by a young chef-proprietor called Alex Aiken has real heights as often as not. Beef with a marvellous red wine sauce and half a dozen kinds of roasted veg, sea bass with thinned aioli, venison with port sauce, lemon tart with rhubarb sauce, fine cheeses. Lunch Tues-Sat, dinner Tues-Sat, £100.

FRENCH COOKING

LONDON

Green's

Marshall Court, Marshall Street, SW1 (071-834 9552)
Tradition? English? Reputable? English? There is a difference. Quite where this falls is anyone's guess. The simple things are good — oysters, dressed crab, etc. The cooked things are marginally inclined towards the nursery, which doubtless suits the perpetually infantile, perpetually squabbling parliamentary punter. Good champagne, better service than the brutes deserve. £100. Lunch and dinner Mon-Fri.

Rules

35 Maiden Lane, WC2 (071-836 5344)
Solid trad Englishness on the plate and all around you — the pinstripes, the mandarins, the spoons, the late Victorian decorative scheme. Steak and kidney pud and savouries are recommended. £45.

OUT OF TOWN

Harpers

5-7 Ox Row, Market Square, Salisbury, Wiltshire (0722 333118)
Fairly simple, first-floor restaurant overlooking Salisbury's impressive market place. Good rack of lamb, mushroom tart, attentively prepared vegetables; impressive selection of French regional wines. £30. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat.

The Red Lion Inn

Newson, Folkingham, near Skegby, Lincolnshire (05297 256)
Remote pub between Grantham and Boston which has been turned up with carriage lamps, horse brasses and so on. What makes it notable is the selection of cold meats prepared by its gaffer, a former pork butcher. These include stuffed chine (a dish peculiar to the east Midlands), cold roast pig, cured tongue, roast pork, etc. More or less self-service. Beer from Bateman's. Lunch and dinner every day. £15.

Immaculate confection

A group of nuns has cooked up a novel way of keeping the house in order

Sister Monica explains quietly: "It is so difficult to think of work for the contemplative nun to do. This suits our way of life, but unfortunately it involves alcohol."

Sister Monica is not in despair over an alarming increase in AA membership among her sisters. She is, in fact, talking about how the nuns of Our Lady of the Passion monastery near Daventry, in Northamptonshire, have found pecuniary salvation through combining alcohol with chocolate to create hand-made Belgian-style liqueur truffles.

Previously they were in the egg business. However, in October 1989 they barricaded themselves in their hen house when government vets arrived to slaughter some of their chickens after traces of salmonella had been discovered.

Later, in the High Court, the Ministry of Agriculture triumphed and the nuns were left with £2,000 compensation (still in dispute) and a pressing need to find another source of income.

"Making chocolate was compatible with our way of life," Sister Jane Anne says. "We also hoped it might attract young girls to come and join us."

Our Lady is the only house of Passionist nuns in Britain — first vow: to promote the memory of Christ's Passion. It was set up in 1964 by a group of nuns from Kentucky, America. Now numbering just ten, their last novice joined five years ago. The sisters learnt their chocolate-making from the Belgian relative of one of their number. "The most important skill is how to handle it. Chocolate can be so messy and temperamental," Sister Monica says.

Meanwhile, an old stable block was gutted, renovated and equipped at a total cost of around £90,000. Most of the money came from donations from various religious houses



Chocaholics: Sisters Jane Anne (left) and Monica with their home-made chocolates

throughout Europe who had been incensed at the British government's treatment of the nuns.

Market research was done in-house. The nuns experimented with the Belgian recipe, producing ten different varieties which all the sisters were asked to taste and grade. "Everyone agreed on certain ones," says Sister Jane Anne, "and we chose the final recipes from that."

No amount of pandering to their Christian charity will draw the ingredients from them, other than that they are pure, fresh and free from artificial additives.

Production began in March 1990. "We took the first batch into the house," Sister Jane Anne says. "One nun said something was wrong with the chocolate; we said there was something wrong with her!"

Over the next few days, however, others remarked on an odd flavour and two nuns developed sores on their lips.

Eventually, it was unanimously declared that their luxury chocolates tasted like mothballs, and their four cows got an unexpected bonus of 90 kilos of truffles.

Ingredients, utensils and equipment were minutely inspected to discover the cause of the problem. "We were about to give up when the National Flooring Company offered to have a look," Sister Jane Anne says.

The company's investigations revealed that damp-proofing laid down during the renovations was to blame. Chocolate is very susceptible to picking up odours — which meant the entire floor had to be re-laid. It also meant 18 months of lost production and no income.

Did they consider that someone was trying to tell them something? "A lot of the nuns thought so," Sister Jane Anne admits. "We prayed a lot to see if this was His will. If we should be doing some-

thing else, we hoped another opportunity would become evident. But if this was His aim, we hoped it would clear up." It did, just in the nick of time.

Although demand now exceeds supply, and the chocolate has received the highest accolade — a sample sent to the Pope drew a letter declaring it the best he had ever tasted — there are no plans to develop the business.

"We don't want to expand, just become more efficient," Sister Monica explains. "Our life of prayer must come first."

HELEN PICKLES

The chocolates are available from: Robert Walker, Oak Farm, Catherine de Barnes, Solihull; Southfields Poultry Farm and Nursery, Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, Coventry; A.E. Beckett & Sons, Heath Farm, Alcester Road, Wythall, Solihull; Our Lady of the Passion Monastery, Daventry (0327 702549). Please telephone your order and collect between 9am and 12pm, Monday to Thursday.



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Will you collect your sheep, or shall I wrap them for you?

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

I would like you to rest assured that I am taking great care with my lambing ewes this year. Whatever the weather I trudge to the yard last thing at night and if any of them look as though they might be breathing heavily or making a nest in the straw — sure signs of lambing — I sneak over, lift their tails and check. I hope that will reassure you that I am being sufficiently attentive to your flock.

Yes, yours. You may not know this, but it will not be long before they are your sheep: you, as taxpayers, are effectively buying them on hire-purchase. It is to do with the Brussels mandarins who have been metaphorically lifting all our tails in search of something in which they can meddle. The result has been a change in the way that grants are paid to farmers. Instead of giving a subsidy on the lambs we send to market

they now bung us a few quid for every ewe we own. It is the poll tax in reverse: you didn't have to do anything to be required to pay the poll tax, other than exist. And farmers don't have to do anything with their breeding ewes, except own them.

The subsidy is quite a hefty sum, between £5 and £10, and set to rise, which means that within five years you will have bought each of my ewes outright.

Of course, the government is being very careful with your money and does not fling it around. That is why a young official, in response to my application of last year, drove 40 miles to check on 19 sheep and drove 40 miles back to his office, no doubt to report to



his manager that he had bravely counted them all out and counted them all back in again. I wonder if it is my duty to warn the police that a dangerously drowsy government official, hypnotised by counting sheep all day, is meandering round the lanes? No wonder none of them can wake up to the fact that this is an indecent waste of their time and your money.

But there is worse. I notice from reading the form that invites me to apply for this year's subsidy that "losses of any sheep subject to the claim must be notified in writing within 10 days of the discovery of the loss". Not quarterly, you notice. Not even monthly: within ten days. Now, it has been said, and



truthfully, that sheep have only one ambition in life, and that is to die. If they come across the slightest opportunity for suicide they will grasp it. Any sheep farmer will confirm that if you were to bury a

land mine beneath the Wembley football pitch and release one sheep on to the grass, within five minutes it would have ambled over the deadly spot. So, given that sheep die easily and frequently, is the govern-

ment ready to handle what can only be a massive mailbag of death notices?

There are 20 million sheep in Britain of which roughly 10 per cent will die naturally this year: so two million grim little notes will have to be penned. Roughly 8,000 every working day.

But reading them is the government's problem; what worries me is what to write. It seems heartless simply to put "One ewe dead. Yours etc..."

But I haven't got time to write in great detail, much as I would want to give an honest and truthful picture of the events.

For example: "Sir, with a heavy heart I beg to inform you that while strolling the meadow this bright and sunny morn, my gaze fell upon a sight that cast a sombre cloud. Sir, I have found a dead ewe and I make no effort to hold back the tears that well in my eyes as I write. For she

was a fine sheep, sir, of noble breeding..."

And what, I wonder, will be the minister of agriculture's reply? I trust it will not be a skimpy little postcard, for such a glib response could only wound further.

No, I am afraid it behoves him to reply to each letter personally. With an election on the way and animal welfare so dear to the electoral heart, surely Mr Gummer will not miss an opportunity to offer his condolences?

Before I decide on which side to cast my vote I intend to question all parties and demand that a sample letter be included in their manifesto to prove their sensitivity.

In the meantime, as I am not inclined to get out the black-edged notepaper every time a sheep gets a headache, the sooner you have made the payments and my flock becomes yours the better. Will you collect, or shall I wrap them for you?

Guardian of all that we survey

Sandy Bisp meets Michael Dower who next month becomes head of the Countryside Commission

When Michael Dower takes up his appointment as the Countryside Commission's new director-general next month, his first thought is likely to be of the father he barely knew, whose name is emblazoned above the entrance to the Commission's headquarters.

John Dower House, in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, recalls the architect and town planner whose 1945 government report led to the creation of our national parks.

Since Michael Dower has spent seven years as the Peak District national park officer before, at 58, heading the Countryside Commission, his dedication to following in his father's footsteps is self-evident. But he soon tells you it is not as simple as that.

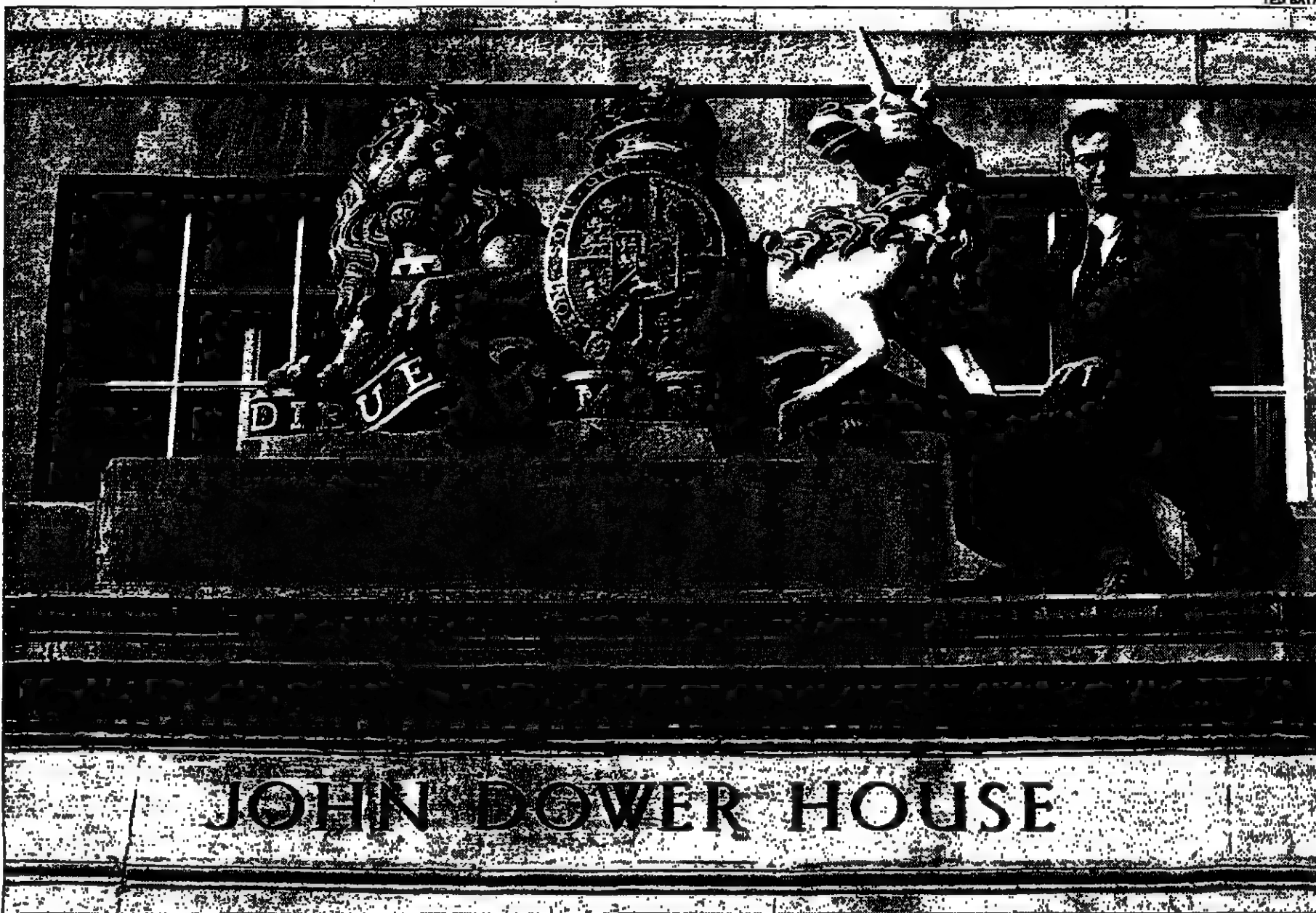
"Seven of us in our family have been involved in this game," he says. "My mother's father, Charles Trevelyan, was a passionate advocate of access who gave his estate in Northumberland to the National Trust. His brother, my great uncle, George Macaulay Trevelyan — the historian — was a wonderful describer in prose of the British countryside and a passionate campaigner for its protection."

"Both were associated with the Youth Hostels and Ramblers' Associations and they helped to persuade my father, after he married my mother, to become involved with the embryonic national parks movement. My father's brother, Arthur, was also national chairman of the Youth Hostels Association."

"Then my mother inherited my father's work, becoming a member and vice-chairman of the National Parks Commission at the time the parks were set up."

The Countryside Commission's new incumbent has only one regret: "I wish my mother had lived to see my appointment. I've already lived 11 years longer than my father, who died at 47."

"I wasn't tremendously influenced by him. His tuberculosis



Rural views: Michael Dower perched outside the Countryside Commission's headquarters in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire — named after the father he hardly knew

meant he was infectious, therefore I was sent away to school fairly early. My mother was a strong-minded woman. She just assumed we were going to go on and do this... my brother and I.

"I had no doubts I was going to become a planner and a countryside manager. It is a tremendous family tradition. My brother Robin finished a nine-year term as a Countryside Commissioner last year."

Mention crisis in the countryside and Michael Dower looks

owlish, as if to say: "What crisis? Isn't there one, what with the exodus from the land of its traditional guardians, the farmers?"

"My view is not one of crisis so much as of opportunity, reflected by a variety of schemes whereby farmers can gain income through environmental management," he says. He adds that he feels strongly about balancing the Commission's two statutory purposes — to protect the landscape and provide access for recreation — with the

well-being of country dwellers. He insists that "the countryside is not just for the people who live there, but for the nation to enjoy".

In 1980 he founded Rural Voice, an alliance of ten national organisations representing rural communities in England and embracing landowners and Women's Institutes, churches and other groups... a family of nearly a million members.

For four years he was also president of Ecovast (European Council for the Villages and the

Small Town) protecting rural people's heritages in 25 European countries.

His team's proposals to rebuild Croatia's farming economy after the loss of rich agricultural land to Slovenia are more pertinent following the civil war.

But at home and hearth what kind of countryside is Michael Dower? "I'm a pantheist," he says. "I see God in everything and feel strange when nature is not directly present."

Two of his key interests are

landscape painting and dry-stone walling. "I like having my hands in nature and on it, observing exactly and seeking to create through it..."

"My present home on the edge of the small town of Bakewell, in Derbyshire, is on the floor of a limestone quarry. There's a mass of surplus stone. I've built retaining walls and steps up the cliff and a limestone roundhouse of Yugoslavian design as a summerhouse at the top." The countryside awaits his next designs.

Less peat, more moor

February is with us, and the light of spring can be sighted, distantly, at the end of the tunnel. Time to think of growth: time to think of rebirth. The birder listens to the slowly rising clamour in the trees and hedges; the gardener plants seeds and considers the new campaign.

So does the conservationist despair? That's easy. All you have to do is to walk in a ruined rain forest, or walk by ruined raised mires. I know: I did both last year. In each case the devastation was complete: a bare horror: the surface of the moon. A crime against life.

The rain forest was in southeast Asia. The raised mire was in Yorkshire, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is the backbone of conservation legislation in this country. But that hasn't stopped the destruction at Thorne and Hatfield Moors.

Bis of it are still lovely; still deeply spooky. These moors support important numbers of Britain's spookiest bird, the nightjar. This is the twilight ghost that hawks for insects like a giant swift, on huge silent wings. Nightingale, teal, whinchat and twite also breed there.

But, of course, we are not talking about protecting a few species of birds. We are talking about a total environment, and that environment is a miracle. It is a mountain of water. It stands like a droplet on a table, held together not by surface tension but by some extraordinary stuff called sphagnum moss.

This is, perhaps, the strangest living community in Britain. The weird plants include sundew, Britain's carnivorous plant. The invertebrates include the monstrous raft spider. Three species of this insect are found in this country only on



Moorland spook: the nightjar is like a twilight ghost hunting insects

Thorne and Hatfield Moors. Two of these are internationally endangered. The moors support 3,000 other species of insect. The place teems with life.

But Fisons continues to tear the place apart. It does so in order to sell peat to gardeners. The company has every right to do so, even though these moors are SSSIs: it has planning permissions granted shortly after the second world war. These are the biggest planning permissions in the country. The local council cannot stop them mining peat and destroying the bog without paying millions in compensation.

Is peat essential to gardeners? Here is a quote from the Royal Horticultural Society's Dictionary

of Gardening, 1951: "Coir was at one time extensively used in horticulture and was most useful... There is nothing that can quite take its place, a good peat being the nearest."

Well, coir is back on the market. Coir must be seen as the life-affirming growth medium for a gardener — a person whose fundamental concern is life. Peat is the stuff of destruction.

Some people will tell you there is a "controversy" about peat. They believe there is an argument about the damage peat extraction causes. There is not. Talk about lowland raised mire — the wonderland of the raft spider and the nightjar — and all the peat

producers have left us with is less than 3,000 acres that can be classified as undamaged bog.

The Peat Producers Association has taken on a PR firm at £100,000 a year to state its case. The firm's track record includes the launch of a peat-miner's code of practice which, it says, was approved by the Nature Conservation Council. The NCC had not even seen it at the time.

This was all part of a complicated response to the Peatland Campaign. The peat producers would no doubt love to write off the opposition as adolescent scaremongers. But the campaign consortium includes the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Royal Society for Nature Conservation and the Wildlife and Wetland Trust — hardly half-cock organisations.

To sigh at the excesses of third world people destroying their natural resources is easy. But this country is doing the same thing.

I mentioned despair. If only there were time for such a thing! Conservation's now-traditional antidote to despair is local action. And for once the first step for local action is easy. Don't buy peat.

SIMON BARNES

● The book Gardening Without Peat is available from Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ, at £5.45, including p&p

● What's about: Birds — good time of year to see woodpeckers actively feeding on bare branches. Twitters — male pine bunting at Blakenham visitor centre, Cresswell, Northumberland; arctic redpoll at East Harting, Norfolk; dotterel in Rye harbour, Sussex. Details from Birdline, 0891 704222.

Funny you should ask...

A series on outdoor matters in which you ask the questions — and provide the answers.

CATS

My mother lives in the small village of Llangattock, Powys, which is surrounded by several farms. In January 1991 one of her young healthy cats was found dead in the garden, curled up as if asleep. The same thing has happened again. Surely if the cats had, say, eaten a poisoned rodent the bodies would have been contorted? Can anyone shed some light on this to avoid 1993 starting as abysmally as the last two years? — Mrs Valerie Swingle, Richmond, Surrey.

WATER SNAILS

I have a small garden pool, about 30 years old, used solely to encourage wildlife. Last year the water-snail population suddenly exploded and they have become a nuisance, even apparently eating the frog and toad spawn. Any suggestions? — G.T. Hulme, Sale, Cheshire.

MYSTERY HOLE

What creature has formed a 4in-deep scooped hole, defying all half-hearted attempts to block it, under my town garden fence and yet does no other damage? Next door is an uncultivated briar and bramble tangle. — Mrs R.G. Hyll, Hull

SPIDERS

Are house spiders a different species from garden spiders? Whenever I am asked by my wife to remove a spider from the bath I invariably eject it through the window. Am I condemning the

spider to death in a cold and hostile environment or am I doing it a favour by introducing it to a potentially larger source of sustenance? I often wonder. — Gp. Capt. R.L.S. Coulson CBE

Still on the subject of arachnids, Mrs Philippa Parks of Winton, Bristol, asked what variety of spider spins a sheet of gossamer to completely cover a four-acre field overnight.

I do not know what species of spider is involved but gossamer is produced by tiny young spiders to aid their dispersal. The long threads are produced when gentle air currents can blow the spiders away. It is only in favourable circumstances that gossamer is seen, walking over ploughed fields in autumn when condensation makes the threads more conspicuous. I well recall leaving my car in open fields with a cushion on the roof on a mild, early autumn day. Gossamer was festooned over it when I returned about an hour later. — K.J. Coghill.

DANCING GULLS

Mrs J. Whittaker of Eastbourne, Sussex, asked why gulls stamp their feet.

I have always believed herring gulls drum their feet on grass to fool earthworms into thinking it is raining. The worms come to the surface and provide easy pickings for the gulls. Nature's way of sending a message for a take-away delivery service. — Patrick Drake, Dorchester, Dorset.

Please send your questions to: Funny you should ask, Weekend Times, The Times, 1 Penington Street, London E1 9XN

EVENTS

□ Chichester bird cruise: RSPB tour of Chichester harbour, with a chance to spot more than 40 varieties of wildfowl and waders.

Inches (015 ref SU799015), Wiltshire Road, (0243 786418), Tomorrow, 2.30pm. £3, child £1.50.

□ Twestedown dragonhead point-to-point: More than 100 horses from the Army Staff College and RMA Sandhurst compete in six races. Twestedown racecourse, Bourley Road, Church Crookham, Hants (0252 616731). Today, noon. £5-£20.

□ Perth bull sales: Hundreds of bulls on show, including Aberdeen Angus, Limousin, Lincoln Red and Simmental. Perth Agricultural Centre, Huntingtower, Tayside (0738 26183). Mon, 9am; Tues, 9.30am; Wed, 10am; Thurs, 10am. Free.

□ Scotland-Monte Carlo: One hundred classic pre-1962 cars, the oldest a 1933 Morgan three-wheeler, set off for 1,800 miles of difficult winter motor-ing. Edinburgh Castle (031-557 1700). Tomorrow, 10.30am. Free.

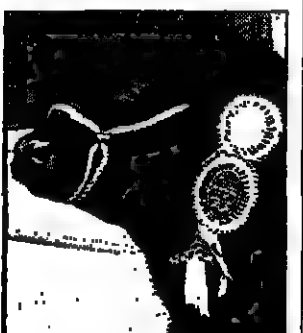
□ North Norfolk Harriers point-to-point: Up to 90 riders compete in seven races over three miles. Higham, near Colchester, Essex (0860 715341). Today, noon. £10 per car.

□ Spalding spring flowers: Exhibition of thousands of forced house flowers. Springfields, Camalgate, Spalding, Lincs (0775 724843). Thurs-Fri, 11am-9pm; Sat Feb 8 and Sun, 10am-5pm. £2.

□ Stoneleigh horse driving: Eino Georg of Germany demonstrates European dressage paces for driven horses, giving guidelines for the new international dressage workman. British Equestrian Centre, Stoneleigh, near Kenilworth, Warwick (0203 696697). Today, 9am; tomorrow, 10am. Spectators free.

□ North Cornwall point-to-point: Up to 80 horses are expected to take part in seven races. Royal Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge (0208 812183). Today, 12.30pm. £2, car and occupants £8.

□ Old Raby point-to-point: More than 100 horses compete in six races over a three-mile course. Wiltan Castle, Wiltan-le-Wear, Durham (038-888 230). Today, 12.30pm. £5-£15.



Prime beef in Perth sale

□ Shugborough clay pigeon shoot: Forty sporting practice and competition, plus a Starshot frame qualifying championship. Shugborough Shooting Club, Oakledge Park, near Rugby, Staffs (0859 881391). Today, tomorrow, 10am-noon. Sporting practice £5.50, competition £7, Starshot £5.

□ Devon orienteering: Four colour-coded courses, plus a string course for toddlers. Woodbury Common (grid ref SY031864), signed from B3180/B3179. Tomorrow, 10am-noon. £2, child 60p.

GARDENS TO VISIT

□ Norfolk: Sheltered valley garden close by the sea famous for its design, classical temple, planting and beautiful views, and one of the best preserved examples of landscaper Humphrey Repton's work. Signed woodland walks. Sheringham Park, off Cromer-Holt road, 4m NE of Holt. Open daily until dusk.

□ Lake District: Lakeland Horticultural Society's garden, looking out over Staithe Pike and Windermere. Trees and herbaceous plants, winter-flowering shrubs and conifers. LHS, Troutbeck, off A592 road 2m N of Windermere. Open daily 9am-dusk. Free.

WHERE TO WALK



Gateway to elegance: pass through Ludlow's Town Gate to discover one of the finest townscapes in England

Although Ludlow has its by-pass, the best time to walk its streets would be either very early on a summer Sunday morning, or late in the evening. The streets are frequently narrow, and country people "in town" linger on pavements in a way nobody would do in Regent Street. Ludlow is a hill town, and its "planted centre" is virtually unspoilt. Start on Ludford Bridge over the Teme, where the old main road from Hereford enters the southern part of the town. Climb Broad Street, passing under the last remaining town gate (there is a house built on its top), and the street opens up to reveal one of the finest townscapes in England.

The houses are Georgian, built when Ludlow was a fashionable winter resort for the gentry. As the road mounts, the houses become antique shops, cafés, the Raven Hotel and de Grey's, where stout farmers eat afternoon teas. At the top of the hill is the Butter Cross, the chimneys of which have long welcomed victors to Ludlow.

Turn left into a maze of medieval lanes, which have filled part of the space left in the 13th century for the market. Ludlow Castle is a huge ruin, once the home of the Council of the Marches of Wales. It contains a rare circular chapel and, from the summit of its battlements, marvellous views to the north and east.

Until five years or so ago the market square contained what Pevsner described as "Ludlow's only ugly building", a late Victorian town hall built in blue and red Midland brick. Suddenly a crack appeared in the fabric, and within a week the monstrosity was no more, a miracle that should have contributed to a local religious revival. Make your way to St Laurence's church, the largest parish church in the county, and

admire its interior; look under the choir seats for rude medieval carvings. The view from the churchyard (which contains a cherry tree in memory of Housman) looking north towards the Long Mynd and the Clee is stunning.

To the east of the churchyard is a lane running to the Reader's House, and a path beyond it leads into Corve Street and the Bull Ring, where the town's most famous hotel, The Feathers, is situated. It is a riot of black and white, with very fine panelling within; a hostelry much favoured by the kind of Americans who look like Cary Grant. Cut back westwards across the top of the town, descend Mill Street,

which is only slightly less favoured than Broad Street, and walk round the town walls back to the town gate. Then drive your car across the medieval bridge, take the first right and climb to a parking place on Whitcliffe, the hill upon which more Ludlovians have been conceived than would readily be admitted, and whence there is the most stunning view of all: the towers and red roofs of Ludlow, dominated by its castle, and cut off from the rude world by its encircling hills. My walk is designed for a first impression; in truth Ludlow is a place of nooks and crannies, suitable for exploration at one's leisure.



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BEST OF BRITAIN

HOUSMAN'S SHROPSHIRE

Julian Critchley, the writer and MP, finds the first snowdrops in the poet's 'blue remembered hills'

Housman's Shropshire has nothing whatsoever in common with Telford New Town, with its golf-playing Japs and immigrant Brunettes, save that they share the same county. The poet's "land of lost content" lies south of the Severn, projected from the Black Country, by the Clee Hills and 30 miles of inadequate roads.

Southwest Shropshire was the first part of England: to be declared an area of outstanding natural beauty, and its charms, though legendary, are still unappreciated by the majority. It is a land of distant horizons, indented by the graceful profiles of "blue remembered hills", where the only danger springs from farmers' sons driving BMWs and the only noise is the hum of a distant tractor.

For Alfred Housman, born in Brompton, over the border in Worcestershire, the Shropshire hills were the backdrop to an unsatisfactory childhood. He plucked place names from the gazetteer, and made the back of beyond famous.

A Shropshire Lad conjures up even today a picture of a vanished rural England, and provides a romantic backdrop against which the tragedy of life can be played out. Housman was determined to call his book of poems Terence, but was thankfully dissuaded by his publisher. The poems with their morbidity are vulnerable to pastiche, but A Shropshire Lad made Housman's reputation as an exquisite minor poet. And he put one of England's prettier counties on the map.

Who, unless they lived in what has always been a sparsely populated county, had ever heard of Wenlock, Clee and Clun, or even Ludlow, before the poems' publication in 1896? A generation of romantically inclined subalterns carried the book with them to France in the Kaiser's war, and it has never been out of print.

The ideal way to visit the south of the county is to take the poems with you and start out on the Housman trail from Ludlow, a 40-mile pilgrimage.

The plum broke forth in green,
The pear stood high and snowed.

My friends and I between
Would take the Ludlow road

Ludlow is the undisputed capital, aesthetic and geographical, of A Shropshire Lad. Indeed, Ludlow is still the market town that A.E. Housman would recognise today. His ashes are buried in the north wall of the

off early on a summer's morning and you should be back in Ludlow for an exquisite light lunch. From the town take the A4117 signposted to Kidderminster. A mile after crossing the A49 bypass take the left fork (the B434), signposted to Bridgnorth. The eastward route is hilly and will take you under the "high reared head" of Clee, along a lightly travelled road, and up between the two Clee hills, Brown and Titterstone, with marvellous views to the western hills of the Welsh Marches.

From Clee to heaven the
beacon burns.
The shires have seen it plain.
From north and south the
sign returns
And beacons burn again.

The road climbs the shoulder of the Brown Clee, the highest hill in Shropshire, and you will eventually reach Burwarton village and then Cleobury North. Watch carefully for the next small lane to your left, and follow it until you are under Abdon Burf, the highest point in the county. In Abdon itself, a deserted village with a pre-Christian circular churchyard, stop and catch your breath.

Housman was no Christian; nor was he an easy man to get on with. He was a classicist at Cambridge University, the leading scholar of his day. At Shrewsbury School, when I was there, we were obliged to translate Housman into Latin, one of the more attractive of Salopian affectations.

When lads were home from
labour

At Abdon under Clee
A man would call his
neighbour

And both would send for me.

In Abdon village turn right and drive to Tugford. Here bear left, following the signs for Ludlow. Continue straight down this lane, and you will be rewarded with one of the finest vistas in

Exquisite: A.E. Housman

parish church of St Laurence's, under the shadow of Ludlow Tower. The May fair to which Housman's doomed lads were always striding is held every year; on Mondays the market still bustles, and the chimneys of the 18th-century Butter Cross still play "The conquering hero comes".

Or come you home of
Monday

When Ludlow market hums

And Ludlow chimneys are
playing

"The conquering hero comes".

My detailed directions will help you to get the fullest enjoyment from the trail. Start



Lamp at Clee St Margaret
GREG EVANS



Guildhall in Much Wenlock



"In valleys of springs of rivers": by the river Clun at Hurst

"Into my heart an air there

England. At your feet is the earth of the Corve Dale, Shropshire's richest farming land. Behind the dale the land rises from the dip slope of Wenlock Edge, beyond which are the peaks of the Stn Hills, the Long Mynd, Siperstones and the dis- Welsh mountains. To the r is the Wrekin; to the s Bringtonwood and the Titters Clee. There will be nothing save for the noise of the and the cries of mountain b Drive on down the in Corve Dale road. In Feb the village of Diddlebury. there and view the expans Corve Dale from the chu yard walls.

The Shropshire poor us go "whinberrying" on the Mynd every August. Fan would walk a ten-mile r journey to spend the long picking the berries, taking ties with them and sandwi of cold boiled bacon. Do pe still go whinberrying? I d know. I have often climbed Long Mynd and spent a summer's day watching changing colours of the cou and reading, if not Housm good book.

Wenlock Edge was umbered
And bright was Abdon Burf
And warm between them
slumbered
The smooth green miles of
turf.

You will eventually c the river Corve on way to join the Tern Ludlow, and then, after a right-angled bend in road, pass the Saxon church the village of Diddlebury. there and view the expans Corve Dale from the chu yard walls.

Oh, I shall be stiff and cold
When I forget you, hearts of
gold:
The land where I shall mine
you not

Easy escapes from the me

Where to check in for a few days of all within an hour or so of the

The George Hotel
High Street, Dorchester-on-
Thames, Oxfordshire OX10
7HE (0865 340404, fax 0865
341620)

Ancient coaching inn with black-and-white facade in showplace Thames-side village with famous abbey and many antique shops. Bedrooms with solid, old-fashioned furniture vary from large with four-poster to cosy under oak beams. Good, traditional cooking in cleverly converted barn with heavily beamed and raftered ceiling, overlooking water garden. Two-acre grounds. B&B double £62. Dinner £18. Two-night week-end package, dinner, B&B, £95 per person.

best
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WEEKENDS

The Stonor Arms
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The metropolis has been getting you down. You long for a spoiling few days in a peaceful rural retreat, but cannot face a long drive. Here are some exceptionally cossetting establishments, some at the hair-singeing end of the market but others with a more temperate tariff. Several are within an hour of town and none should involve more than a two-hour drive unless you hit the rush hour. Most offer bargain breaks.

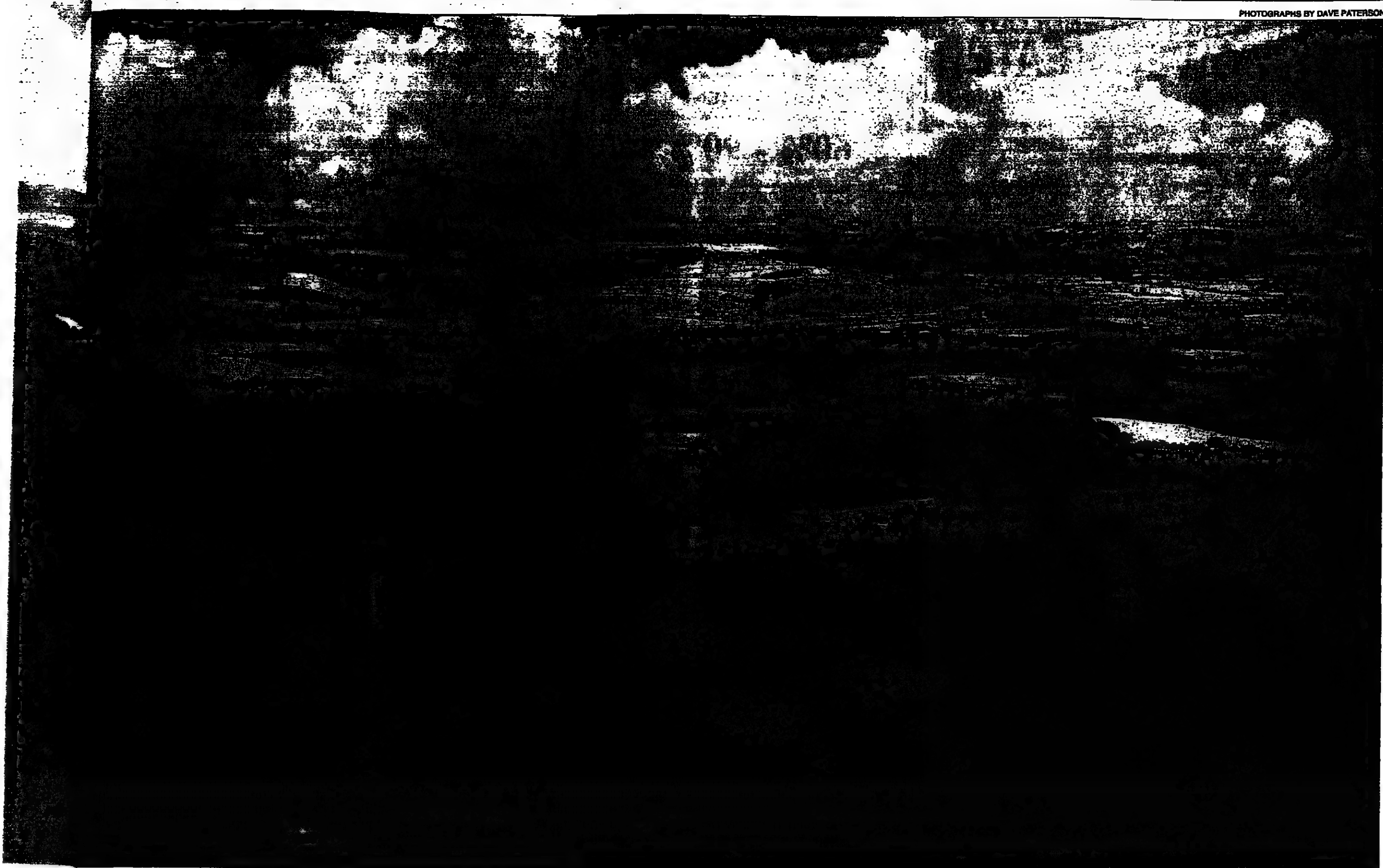
Cliveden
Taplow, Buckinghamshire, SL6 0PF (0628 668561, fax 0628 661837)
Magnificent stately home in large, lovely National Trust grounds overlooking Thames. Unintimidating despite its grandeur, and welcoming to children. Spectacular public

rooms; two restaurants. Splendid bedrooms in main house; equally comfortable if less impressive ones in garden wing. Double with continental breakfast £205-£298, suite £355-£450. English breakfast £9.50. A la carte dinner £45.

The Beetle and Wedge
Moulsoford-on-Thames, Oxfordshire OX10 9TF (0491 651381, fax 0491 651376)
Richard and Kay Smith's friendly hotel in delightful riverside setting on edge of village, eight miles northwest of Reading. Pleasant lounge with open fires; bedrooms range from large to very small. Smart restaurant; also bistrot-type Boatouse, both serving good food. Splendid breakfasts. Fishing, boating, overnight mooring. B&B double from £75. A la carte meals £20-£30.

July 1990

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE PATTERSON



From your far country blows: looking out from the Long Mynd over the valley of the river Onny

the land where all's forgot,
and if my foot returns no more
to Teme nor Corve nor
Severn shore,
uck, my lads, be with you
still
y falling stream and
standing hill.

to through Diddlebury, and
ark right at the T-junction on to
the main B4368. After about
no miles, having passed
through the villages of Aston
Munslow and Munslow, watch
or a left-hand signpost to
tushbury. Take this narrow
one and you will find yourself
limbing to the brow of the
Hynock Edge.

On Wenlock Edge the wood's
in trouble;
His forest fleece the Wrekin
heaves;
The gale, it plies the saplings
double,
And thick on Severn snow the
leaves.

The road drops down the scarp
of the Edge, wending its way
down Roman Bank. Follow the
road down to its junction with
the B4371 and turn right. The
road climbs back up the ridge,
going through the forest that
covers the Edge (in the Domes-
day Book, the "Long Forest").
After three miles or so there is at
Pen-thope a very sharp back-
ward left turn which we take,
leading down to Hughley.

The vale on Hughley steeples
ers bright, a far-known
sign,
And there lie Hughley people
And there lie friends of mine.

The clock is also supposed to
tell the time to none", and the
church never had a steeple. Who
ares? Climb back up the Edge
and take a right towards Hope
Bowler and to Church Stretton
B4371). There are marvellous
views of the Caradoc "volcan-
ics" — the remnants of 700
million-year-old lava flows —

and the long hog's back of the
Long Mynd, blue in summer,
brown in winter.

Into my heart an air that
kills
From your far country blows:
What are those blue
remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are
those?

A Stretton turn left at
the traffic lights on
the A49 and travel
south on this main
road until you reach Craven
Arms. Turn right on to the
B4368 to Clun, going through
Aston on Clun, and Clunton on
the way. The scenery becomes
wilder, more Welsh.

In valleys of springs of
rivers,
By Onny and Teme and Clun,
The country for easy livers,
The quietest under the sun.

Clun is a funny one-eyed place
with a handsome church and
ruined castle. From
here the Housman trail turns
south down the A488, over wild
hill country with a view of
Corndon Hill to the north and
Caer Caradoc to the east (there
are two Caradocs in Shropshire)
until we reach Knighton, half in
England, half in Wales. Hous-
man gave it a sinister ring.

'Tis a long way further than
Knighton,
A quieter place than Clun,
Where doomsday may thunder
and lighten,
And little 'twill matter to one.

After Knighton turn left on the
A4113 and follow the Teme
back to Ludlow, via Leintward-
ine, the Roman Bravonium.
The road climbs to the Fiddler's
Elbow, whence is found the
most spectacular view of all, the
elegant profile of the Titterstone
Clee, dominating the southern
end of the Corve Dale, and
standing guard over Ludlow.
The first glimpse of Ludlow is

of its red sandstone church
tower which, together with its
limestone castle, mark the
summit of what is a hill town,
cradled in a bend of the river
Teme, where the farmers' wives
sound like Charlie Grundy and
the rich are buying up the
Georgian houses in Broad and
Mill Street.

The sunless tale of sorrow
is all unrolled in vain;
May comes tomorrow
And Ludlow fair again.

The Housman Society is very
active in this county, and couns
Enoch Powell among its pa-
trons. It publishes a learned
journal and meets once a year in
May in Ludlow, when the
members and local dignitaries
process to the church for a short
service, pay tribute to the poet at
his graveside, and return to a
Ludlow hotel for a slap-up tea.
Sadly Housman never went to
Shropshire for his holidays,
preferring the charms of both
Venice and its gondoliers.

South Shropshire is a cham-
paign country, green and gold
where the detached hills are
high enough to be spectacular,
and the pace as slow as anyone
would wish. John Bejeman and
John Piper wrote and illustrated
one of the first *Shell Guides*
about the county, and the poet
could never seem to make his
mind up about Shropshire: the
red parts reminded him of
Devon, the green of Somerset,
and the blue of parts of Wales. It
is a quiet land, long famed for
its sheep and its Tories. The
accent is English West Country
but with a Welsh lilt, and the
black puddings are as good as
any you will find in Burnley.

The Housman trail will give
the traveller as pretty a slice of
England as he could wish for:
border castles, churches built
like fortresses, black and white
farms at the end of lanes, stone-
built cottages and, in spring, the
orchards in bloom.

★ WHERE TO STAY ★

THE Feathers (0584 875261), Ludlow's
premier hotel, was built in the 16th
century and has been sensibly
modernised. Thanks to the town's by-pass
it is now quiet and very comfortable. The
price of the rooms ranges from £104 a
night for the Comus Suite (Milton's Comus
was first performed at Ludlow Castle) or
for a room with a four-poster bed, £62 for a
single and £88 for a double — with 20th
century beds. There are 40 rooms in all,
and space for car parking.

The Angel Hotel in Broad Street (0584
872581) is comfortable and unpreten-
dious. It has 17 rooms priced at £56 for a
double and £38 for a single, including
breakfast.

South Shropshire is B&B country, and
there is hardly a farmhouse that will not

put you up. I stay twice a year with
Rosemary and Alan Laurie at Church Bank
Cottage, Burrington (056886 426), some
five miles from Ludlow across Brimewood
forest towards Wigmore. Mr Laurie was a
housemaster at Shrewsbury School. Their
cottage is bookish, comfortable and
entirely relaxed. An excellent four-course
dinner costs £9.50, and bed and breakfast
£12.50. The ducks and hens roam wild, the
hamlet is silent save for a daily postal
delivery van, and the cottage is overlooked
by a pretty church with unusual iron
tombstones. The Teme is a quarter of a
mile away, and the Vale of Wigmore
sublimely pretty. It's a shame Housman
never wrote about it. If the Lauries are full
they will recommend their daughter's
establishment in Kington (0544 230176).

★ WHERE TO EAT ★

Exhausted pilgrims
should head for Poppies
(0584 72230), a
restaurant at Brimfield on the
A49 between Ludlow and
Leominster, found within a
pub called The Roebuck
which has just been voted
Egon Ronay Pub of the
Year 1992. Poppies is where
Carole Evans cooks like a
Queen. There is a newly-built
dining-room of 40 covers,
three tables within the pub
and the best range of bar
snacks you will ever find. The
meat is local and well
hung, the vegetables home-

grown and the fish hails
from Cornwall.
Hotel food elsewhere is
undistinguished, although
Country Friends (0743
73707) at Dorrington, some
six miles from Shrewsbury,
was the 1991 *Good Food
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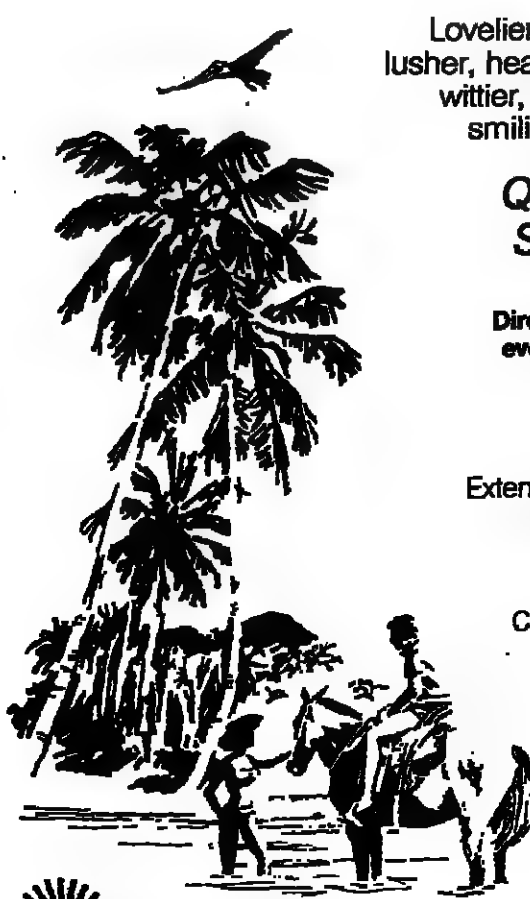
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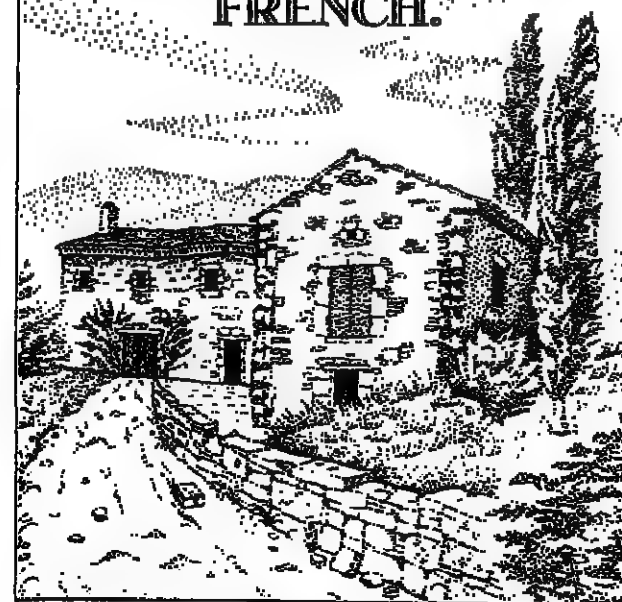
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BEST BUYS

WATCH out for early-flowering dwarf irises — small flags of blue, purple and yellow, tiny counterparts of their high-summer relatives.

Those who missed buying bulbs in the autumn, or have just woken up to their attractions, can find small pots of bulbs just coming into bloom in good garden centres. They are quite expensive (about £1.25-£1.75 for a pot of three to five bulbs) but reliable.

After flowering they should be given a liquid feed high in potash and either kept in their pots (replace compost in autumn) or planted in a sunny, free-draining place in the garden.



Now is the time for early irises

WEEKEND TIPS

● Sow lettuce, carrots and radishes in cold frames, under cloche protection or in a cool greenhouse.

● Keep fruit trees and bushes weed-free, but don't mulch until the ground warms up.

● Prepare seedbeds, warming the soil by covering with a floating cloche; remove fresh weed growth at intervals.

● Lay turf for new lawns during periods of mild weather.

● Clean pots and seed trays ready for use.

Don't cold shoulder the subtle willow

Francesca Greenoak rediscovers a tree that offers a vase-full of winter colour

An unusual bouquet consisting only of willow stems has opened my eyes to an extraordinary range of hardly known plants which are at their most beautiful at this time of year.

We all know the Easter pussy willow, the goat willow (*Salix caprea*), with its silky-soft grey catkins. But I recently discovered that there are other, earlier flowering kinds with exquisite variations in stem colours and catkins.

A Dutch form of *Salix acutifolia* called Blue Streak has plum-purple stems clouded with a lovely white on which balance small, slender, silver-grey catkins. At maturity this willow makes a graceful, largish shrub.

By contrast the bright, stubby catkins, thickly alternating down its green stem, mark *Salix aegyptiaca* as another good, early-flowering shrub. Much daintier in its catkins, *Salix purpurea* Japonica is characterised by tiny, silky grey catkins down its wiry stems.

The delicate beauty of the new, arching, red twigs of *Salix purpurea* Nancy Saunders makes it highly desirable in a vase of flowers, even though its small catkins do not appear until spring.

The early flowering *Salix* catkins are my personal favourite. Its

plump, silvery-pink catkins softly covered in white down. *Kotens* (a hybrid of *Salix viminalis*, one of the best known basket-making willows) makes a fairly vigorous tree, which can be coppiced or pollarded.

It is not yet on the market, perhaps because it flowers better if it is allowed to grow large, but I hope nursery firms will make it available to gardeners.

I was fortunate to have Ken Stott as my willow mentor. He has studied them for 40 years, while looking after the large collection at Long Ashton, near Bristol — where 700 different kinds have been grown and evaluated.

Work at Long Ashton has now taken on a new lease of life with increased interest in willow biomass (coppice growing for fuel), but there are also continuing trials for soil stabilisation, windbreaks and roadside planting. "Contrary to the common view, most willows will thrive on any reasonably decent soil," Mr Stott says, "and do not need especially moist conditions."

During the course of his work Mr Stott has identified willows of excellent garden value, as yet hardly used in gardening or landscaping.

Wind in the willows: *Salix chrysocoma*, glorious in spring and summer, also contributes its subtle twig colour to winter bouquets

All too often an unsuitable kind is chosen; the much-loved weeping willow, for example, often planted by pond-sides, will grow far too big for all but the largest gardens.

Shrubby kinds, such as Nancy Saunders or Tortuosa, the twist-stemmed Dragon's Claw willow, are more suitable (new plants can be readily propagated from cut-

tings if they get too big for the space allotted). All willows (except *S. caprea*) grow readily from cuttings — some of those in my bouquet are already making roots.

During this month (or any time in the winter) pencil-thick twigs should be cut, trimmed to about 10in/25cm and pushed deeply (about 8in/20cm) into a pot of

gritty compost or soil in a cold frame.

The best known coloured-stemmed willow is the golden-orange *Salix alba virellina*, but there are others well worth growing, such as the red Britzensis, or the black-stemmed willow which was known as Nigricans at Long Ashton. This contrasts well with

the ghostly white *Salix irrorata*, with its rich white bloom.

To give best stem colour, these vigorous plants should be cut back every year or in alternate years to a ground-level coppice crown, or pollarded to make a mophead at shoulder or hip height (cut in alternate years for the best catkins).

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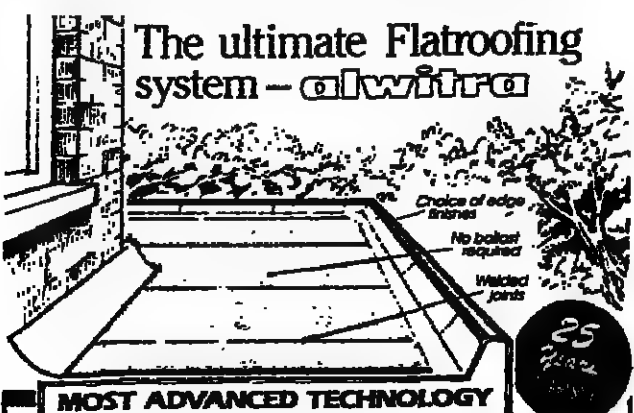
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Doctor's dilemma

Seven years ago, Dr Michael Barracough had a dream: that his fellow Docklanders in east London, who aspired to home ownership but balked at the developers' prices, would roll up their sleeves and build their own houses on derelict land.

The reality is Maconochies Wharf, 89 houses on the southern tip of the Isle of Dogs, one of many community self-build projects which thrived in inner cities during the 1980s.

Then came the recession, and Dr Barracough's plan for another 56 houses on a nearby site in the Royal Docks at Newham has foundered on the rock of building society finance.

"It's crazy," he says. "Now is the time to build, as land prices are down. So are material costs." In Docklands, for example, the cost of an acre has dropped from more than £1 million to £500,000. "In the 1980s we could not afford the land. Now we can, but we are not being allowed to borrow the money."

The Newham scheme was born four years ago out of the commitment of 30 people and their families who formed the Docklands Self-Build Housing Association.

The theory was that half the members would use their construction skills, the others would labour while they learnt. The association could employ its own architects, and extra builders if need be, thereby cutting the costs of building and the developer's profit.

The average cost of buying the land and building a reasonably sized family house for the Newham scheme, they calculated, would work out at less than £59,000. Similar new housing in Docklands costs twice that.

The plan was that the building costs would be met by a building society mortgage of £23,000, matched by a grant of £23,000 per house promised by the government-funded Housing Corporation, which was given £3 million for community self-build schemes in

Reluctant building societies are dashing the home-owning dreams of London's self-build champion. Rachel Kelly reports

March 1991 to support home ownership. So far, that grant is untouched, because the association has been unable to persuade the building societies to lend the £23,000 each self-builder needs.

"We've tried everyone," says Susan Happy, one of the would-be self-builders. "We even tried the Reichmann brothers [the developers of Canary Wharf] but they didn't reply to the letter. It really is very depressing. We've been waiting for four years."

Until the £23,000 can be raised, Mrs Happy will stay with her husband in their tiny council flat in Bethnal Green, and delay her plans to start a family.

The remaining £13,000, the cost of the land to be bought from the London Docklands Development Corporation, need not be found straight away, as the LDDC has agreed to defer 90 per cent of the land cost until completion.

Furthermore, the £59,000 cost of each house can be reduced still further with government subsidies. First, the LDDC is prepared to convert part of what might otherwise be an unaffordable land cost to the self-builders into an equity stake of equivalent value in the completed house.

Second, under the 1988 Housing Act, councils or housing associations can provide tenants wanting to buy a home, such as the Happy's, with a transferable grant. This could provide the couple with £10,000 to £15,000 towards their new home. It also frees a home which the council can give to a homeless family. But Tower Hamlets council has delayed giving such grants until the building societies have coughed up.

The building societies accept that in the past the incentive for individuals to build their own homes

resulted in lower prices than anywhere else in the market, but say that as prices fall they no longer believe the commitment among self-builders is there.

"We don't believe that the individual looking at the equation now really will have the confidence and commitment to see it through," says Richard Spielman, of the Halifax. "Commitment in the current market is far more tenuous."

Other building societies, such as the National and Provincial, had their fingers burnt when they became involved with self-styled "self-build consultants" in the 1980s. Dr Barracough says, "Unlike our community self-build schemes, with members in housing need who brief the architects so that the housing is designed individually for them as their future home, most self-build consultants simply enrolled anyone to build housing that had already been designed."

Instead of being genuine self-builders creating a home, those involved tended to want to cash in on the 1980s property boom. When that turned sour they walked off site, leaving the building society with derelict land and half-built houses.

"The schemes that went wrong were all 'consultant' ones, where the people saw the scheme as a way of making an asset," Dr Barracough says. "But people kept on working on the community ones, where there was a high degree of identification with the homes."

The building societies' fence-sitting is heartbreaking for self-builders up and down the country awaiting finance, he says. As the societies fiddle, the price of land may start going up again, making the schemes once more out of reach. Dr Barracough's attraction to

self-build was nourished in India, where he was born and lived until the age of 14 when he came to England. "In the third world there is no housing problem," he says. "Primitive man always houses himself; there is no social structure to housing. And the third world is on our doorstep in Docklands. But we have entrapped people, removed areas of self-determination like housing. We need to free them."

When Dr Barracough moved to the Isle of Dogs in 1977, he built his own house looking out across the Thames to the naval college at Greenwich. Now he has given up his job as a consultant physician at St Thomas's hospital to concentrate full-time on the tribulations of community self-build and other inner-city projects.

He could be accused of idealism after all, how many people are really prepared to pick up the challenge of building their own house? "Listen," he says. "Self-build helps the 15 per cent who want to build for themselves. It will never be everybody; 85 per cent won't be able to help themselves, or willing to. But for those who do, it's the most cost effective way — and many people's only chance."

The fundamental problem with modern housing is that few of us have any involvement in design, says Dr Barracough, who built his white wood and brick home, reminiscent of a tall ship in full sail, in keeping with its river setting.

Others are less lucky, he says. The middle class and affluent can retreat into what is old or pretty, but the working classes have traditionally had to take what is given to them. And it isn't very pleasant. I feel passionately about this."

Tommy Taylor, a 59-year-old self-builder, one of the lucky ones who completed his home at Maconochies Wharf three years ago, says: "Other than get married and having kids this is the finest thing a man can ever do, to build his own house. I don't mind how much my house is worth. I couldn't move away."



Builder extraordinaire: Tommy Taylor outside the home he built himself in Maconochies Wharf

Home from home: Lady Elizabeth Anson at Shugborough

Living up to the family inheritance



Childhood memories: Lady Elizabeth Anson grew up at Shugborough, the Lichfield family seat

Lady Elizabeth Anson's second home was also her first. She and her brother Patrick, now Lord Lichfield, were brought up at Shugborough in Staffordshire, the Anson family home.

Following her parents' separation and divorce she and Patrick divided their time between their mother and father, staying when in Staffordshire in the big house, until their father renovated a farmhouse on the estate for them. She kept house for him until his death, when she was 15. Five years later she and her brother moved back into the big house. "The continuity in my life has always been my brother," Lady Elizabeth says. "He's probably the most important person to me in the world."

Running Shugborough — light and elegant, with pretty pavilions and colonnades added by James "Athenian" Stuart and Samuel Wyatt — was "an enormous challenge".

"She remembers her step-grandmother saying at the time: 'You can't move back — you can't possibly afford the dailies.' Instead, Mrs Fox from the village came in to help. "She named us along and kept us going with cottage pies, steak and kidney puddings and marvellous treacle tarts. When we had people to stay for the weekend — eight wasn't an unusual number — I'd rush back from London and do the main courses," she says.

By then Lady Elizabeth had started a business organising parties and dinners in London: the origin of Party Planners, the company she runs today.

"In those days it was cheaper to have meat sent down from Scotland at 5lb for £1, plus 2s 6d postage, than to buy it in England."

A room has always been kept for Lady Elizabeth although, she says, "with all the changes of ownership, I have moved bedrooms three times".

The National Trust acquired Shugborough in the 1960s, but it is run by Staffordshire County Council "because we couldn't afford the endowment," she says. The main part of the house is open to the public. The private rooms, Lord Lichfield's wing, include many of the rooms they had known in childhood, such as the old nursery floor and the schoolroom.

"Our drawing-room is what we used to call the Bird Room — my grandfather was fanatical about these wonderful cases of dead birds, some of which we've kept." The verandah is excellent for alfresco lunches, even though only half of it is private.

The Verandah Room itself is now open to the public. "It used to have at least five writing tables in it," she says. "All the uncles and aunts used to write letters there, something no one does any more."

Although Lady Elizabeth claims not to have been terribly practical when she was 20, she insisted that the Trust build steps down to the lawn. "So that someone could wheel a pram outside."

The Trust's acquisition of Shugborough was not, she says, "a huge change. We hadn't gone in through the grand portico since the war, for example."

"To begin with, though, I'd get paranoid hearing people scabble about on the gravel all day long, and I'd go to doors that no longer led anywhere," she says. My grandfather couldn't have coped. If he saw anyone in the grounds he'd practically have them shot."

The flower garden was dug for victory during the war after which it was maintained as a vegetable plot. "We were allowed down for lunch on Sundays and tea every day. My grandfather had a small safe in which he kept not jewels but beetroot. If we ate all our sandwiches we were allowed a radish and a piece of beetroot from grandfather's safe."

Lady Elizabeth returns to Shugborough "all the holidays and weekends, if I'm not working". She has recently opened a new office, Party Planners Plus, in Wilmslow, Cheshire, to deal with the North, Scotland, and the Midlands. "As Shugborough's en route I shall be coming here more and more."

Although she has now given up shooting, which she learnt at 11, Lady Elizabeth still enjoys long walks and picnics "no matter how freezing it is".

The garden remains largely as it was when she was a child, a blend of formal grass terraces and long herbaceous borders, with temples and pavilions in both the garden and the wilder areas or the 18th-century park.

"The park has the biggest yew tree in England. We had a hide-hole in there that nobody could find," she says. "It has subsequently become a hiding place for my nephew and niece and my daughter Fiona and my wonderful stepsons, Josh and Nicholas."

The boys are now grown up, but Fiona, 18, returns regularly in the school holidays. "I shall always remember my nephew Thomas, when he was ten, saying very seriously to Fiona: 'I want you to know through all your life this will always be your home.' And it always has."

ELUNED PRICE



Buyers' France THE CREUSE

Fresh fields with sport at its heart

For just £12,100 (including agency fees), you can buy this little terrace house in the small town of Chamon-sur-Vouzie, between Montluçon and Guéret, in the northeast of the Creuse. The area can be reached in about five or six hours by car from Calais, or three and a half hours from Orly airport, south of Paris.

The old stone-built house has been restored, with a new roof and a modern, fitted bathroom, and is ready to move into. It has a kitchen/living-room and a small bedroom on the ground floor, with a large bedroom upstairs that could be turned into two rooms. In addition there is a cellar, store-room and an attic.

Although the property does not have a garden, there is a cobbled area with a bench in front of the house and a very pretty river with a large grass bank only yards away. The British agent is Barbers, 427-429 North End Road, Fulham, London SW6 071-381 0112.

The rolling countryside of the Creuse, a little-known department in the Limousin region of central France, is wet, wooded and unspoilt. It remains largely undiscovered by the British and property prices are low.

A farming area of lush pastures and grazing cattle, it is famous for



A village house at £12,100 is succulent beef, and sweet dishes made from the wild cherries that grow in abundance.

There is good fishing and riding, several large lakes for windsurfing and waterskiing, and forests of beech, chestnut and oak, where deer and wild boar roam.

On the cultural side there is Aubusson, a medieval town that for more than 500 years has produced the finest tapestries in France; and Limoges, the porcelain centre, with its museums and art galleries.

The area has a good supply of unconverted country cottages, farm buildings and village houses — £40,000 is the top price, and there are plenty for under £15,000.

CHERYL TAYLOR

What's in a name?

Calling your home The Old Manor House could be a good selling point

Houses with names rather than numbers have more than sentimental value. Would Rose Cottage by any other name sell so fast? "The late Roy Brooks always added £5,000 for a named house," Tony Halstead, of the now defunct Roy Brooks estate agents, confides. "I must say it's still the case."

Agents agree that the most desirable name in Britain is The Old Manor House, with The Old Rectory a close second. "It goes with the snob value of pillars and a long drive," Henry Prior of Strutt and Parker says.

Recently Norfolk agent Robin Steggles was astonished at the rush to buy an ordinary three-bedroom house called The Manor House. But only Americans are impressed by The White House — in the Home Counties, especially, white houses are common.

Individual time-honoured names are part of the property. You buy a place in history as well as a place to live. Clinkers, a 16th-century cottage in Jane Austen's village of Chawton, Hampshire, was the blacksmith's headquarters, called after the trade that was also the occupants' surname. Now for sale through Hamptons the owner, Sue Aiken, says: "The name is so unusual, it definitely draws buyers."

Idiosyncratic local names boost interest. Among the most exclusive are the cottages in Winchelsea, East Sussex, where the word for a plot of land is "plot". Each owner knows who originally occupied the house — Ballader's Plot, for instance, was the ballad-singer's home.

Do not assume, however, that a house name is part of the fixtures and fittings. When they bought Church Farm, Basil and Adie Towers were astonished when the sellers announced they were taking the name for their new house nearby.

By charm and persuasion Mr and Mrs Towers kept the name. But who was legally right? Nobody, according to Ruth Barnes, a partner at conveyancing specialists Hardwick & Co. "Buyers or sellers have no firm rights to a name — it's all down to agreement in the contract," she says.

You can always invent a name to attract more buyers to your home, but check with the Post Office that your neighbour has not also chosen Honeysuckle Cottage, or the postman will get confused. One street in Surbiton, south London, has three different Coach Houses, whose owners good-humouredly swap misdirected post.

Ms Barnes also suggests registering your house name with the Land Registry, which may even provide a historical clue to inspire you. If your house was built on old farmland it could be called Ploughman's Cottage, for instance. Not everyone is as lucky as the sellers of a rambling country home called Catherine of Aragon in Dogmersfield, Hampshire. Henry VIII's first queen stayed



Regal home: Catherine of Aragon in Dogmersfield, Hampshire

there in 1501, before her marriage to his elder brother, Prince Arthur. However entrancing, unusual names can cause problems. I once fell in love with a houseboat because of its *Wind in the Willows* address: Toad in the Hole, Ivy

Castle Yard, Eel Pie Island (sold by Mr and Mrs Otter). The disadvantage was that we were missed off the electoral register because the compilers did not believe it existed.

JANE FURNIVAL

Heap of the week: Teddington Hall Faded glory



Neglect: successive governments have allowed the hall to decay

TEDDINGTON Hall is the haunted mansion of a hundred children's stories. Standing empty, in a neglected garden, secluded by overgrown shrubs and tall conifers, it is only a few dozen yards behind the pavement of Hampton Road, one of the main thoroughfares in the west London suburb of Teddington.

Teddington Hall would have happily divided into flats had it not been swallowed up in the vast precinct of the National Physical Laboratory on the edge of Bushy Park. And when the house became surplus to requirements it was not sold off but, in the tender loving manner of governments, left to rot.

In November 1991 the National Audit Office singled out Teddington as an outrageous example of the way government squanders its property assets. An NAO report concluded that the cost of repairs on the hall had escalated from £130,000 to more than £1 million in just seven years, due to lack of proper inspection and maintenance.

It is possible, however, that a new era has dawned. Property Holdings is now so ashamed of the state of the building that it tried to stop *The Times* taking a photo-

graph. True, the tin lid keeping the weather out is not prepossessing, but at least it is a sign of action.

Someone in the government should have had the courage to give Teddington Hall away to a housing association. Curiously a modest new building might actually help at the back of the site as it would shield the vast car park of the laboratory behind. But even planning permission for an extension will do no more than cover the cost of repairs.

Teddington escaped intense development in the first half of the 19th century when the manor belonged to a Mr P.W. Smith of Lambeth, south London. But following his death in 1852 the estate was sold off and rapidly built over with substantial villas.

The President House, built in 1863 for John Cornelius Park, was originally named Gothic Hall, but in 1870 Mr Faithfull Cookson, an iron-master and merchant from Chester, took over and renamed it Teddington Hall.

Teddington is not yet officially on the market but anyone interested should contact Stephen Collins of Rogers Chapman (081-759 4141).

MARCUS BINNEY

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BBC 1

- 7.35 Open University (7071289): The Enlightenment 8.00 Children's Drawings 8.25 Writing and Unwriting Testimony
8.50 News (0330005) 9.10 News and weather (0330444)
9.15 *Getting Through*: Alma Moore, the widow of broadcaster Ray Moore, discusses how she has coped with bereavement (1945579)
9.30 *This is the Day*: Arts officer Terry-Anne Preston talks to Norma Cridock about God's creativity (33821)
10.00 *See Hear* (58182): Wales: Second Chance Challenge
10.30 *Deutsche Direkt*: German conversation (j) (5870734)
10.55 *Aspirin Shop*: Extra! Consumer issues (7757531)
11.00 *Second Chance Challenge*: The attendance of mature students at colleges of further education (95734). Wales: See You Sunday
12.00 *Bazaar*: Nerys Hughes presents the ideas programme (8054463)
12.25 *Experiments*: The science of dry ice and moth balls (8179444)
12.30 *Country File* with John Craven (3636444): Wales: Farming in Wales 12.55 *Weather* (9045482)
1.00 *News* (3019734) followed by *On the Record*: Jonathan Dimbleby and John Cole report on the political issues surrounding the forthcoming general election (224865)
2.00 *EastEnders*: Omnibus edition. (Ceefax) (s) (89821)
3.00 *Film: Hot* (1987): Efficient omnibus drama, adapted from Arthur Hailey's best-seller, about a New Orleans hotel and its myriad guests. Starring Rod Taylor. Directed by Richard Quine (8737)
5.00 *Tom and Jerry*: Cartoon (1316192)
5.05 *The Clothes Show*: Fashion magazine presented by Jeff Banks. Selma Scott and Ceryn Franklin (s) (2589203)
5.30 *Antiques Roadshow*: Hugh Scully and experts visit Chippenham in Wiltshire (92489)
6.15 *Play It Safe*: Anna Rice offers advice on avoiding house fires (58314)
6.25 *News* with Moira Stuart. Weather (963840)
6.40 *Songs of Praise*: From tonight the words of the hymns will be displayed on the screen. To mark the occasion, Debbie Throver visits Olney in Buckinghamshire, noted for its hymn-writing tradition. (Ceefax) (s) (111753)
7.15 *'Allo! 'Allo!* Comedy with the French farcous. Will René marry Yvette? With Gordon Kays. (Ceefax) (s) (847463)
7.45 *Lovelyjoe*: Angel Traverses. Amiable drama series starring Ian McShane and the rugged antiques dealer. (Ceefax) (s) (2589203)
8.35 *As Time Goes By*: Gentle romantic comedy about two old flames who are reunited. Starring Judi Dench and Geoffrey Palmer. (Ceefax) (s) (391759)



Married to a moaner: long-suffering Annette Crobie (0.05pm)

- 9.05 *One Foot in the Grave*: Monday Morning Will Be Fine. The return of David Raven's caustic comedy starring Richard Wilson as the morbid pensioner. (Ceefax) (s) (138666)
9.40 *Birds of a Feather*: Selling. The Christmas 1989 episode of the comedy series about two prison widows. Starring Pauline Quirke, Linda Robson and Lesley Joseph (j). (Ceefax) (250666)
10.10 *News* with Michael Buerk. Weather (380531)
10.25 *Everyman's Lifetime*
● CHOICE: Here is the story of an intense, emotional and highly unlikely friendship between a middle-class Englishwoman and a convicted murderer 4,000 miles away. Mary Grayson, a retired music teacher from Berkshire, was put in touch with Ray Clark through an organisation called Lifelines. Clark, a 49-year-old window cleaner, had been on death row in a Florida prison since 1977. Their worlds could hardly have been more different. In contrast to her stable family life she had been a social outcast, abandoned by her parents and with a long history of depression and failure. Their correspondence, conducted during the two months up to Clark's execution, lifted him and enriched her. With Clark's letters spoken by an actor and Grayson reading hers it makes simple, direct and moving television. The programme is also, though this is not its overt purpose, a devastating indictment of capital punishment. (Ceefax) (123666)
11.05 *Snooker*: The Benson and Hedges Masters from Wembley (42347)
12.05am *Mahabharat* (j) (4417796) 12.45 *Weather* (8178222)

BBC 2

- 6.35 *Open University* (5831821): Electrons and Atoms 7.00 *Caring for Data* 7.25 *Child's Play* 7.50 *Worlds to That Effect* 8.15 *Physiology* 8.40 *Technology* 9.05 *Oceanography* 9.35 *The Planet Earth* 10.20 *The Present in the Past* 10.45 *Social Problems and Social Welfare* 11.10 *Open Advice* 11.35 *Managing Customer and Client Relations*
12.00 *Westminster Programme* (2314): Northern Ireland: Green-fingers; Wales: Scrutiny
12.30 *Colchester*: Second Tale. Highlights of the fourth day's play between New Zealand and England from Auckland (42579)
1.00 *Film: The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle* (1939, b/w). Agreeable musical biopic of the early 20th-century dancing team, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Directed by H.C. Potter (59005)
2.30 *Snooker*: Eamonn Holmes introduces the Benson and Hedges Masters from Wembley Conference Centre (726570)
5.00 *Rugby Special*: Chris Rice introduces highlights of yesterday's five nations championship matches between England and Ireland and Wales and France (8734)
6.00 *984 Sunday*: David Vine introduces action from the women's downhill competition in Switzerland (780005)
6.35 *The Money Programme* (82820)
7.15 *Prisoners of the Sun*: Energy Wars. The last of three programmes exploring the forces that control life on Earth. Is the energy war worth winning? (Ceefax) (382314)
8.05 *Signs of the Times*: That Little Bit Different. The last in the series about people's taste in the home (45855)
8.55 *Balloons*: The 1991 Cinnamon Grand Prix award-winning cartoon (s) (253588)
9.05 *Trying Times*: Bedtime Story. In another angst-infused tale from the United States, Gary is kept awake by his fear of fatherhood. Starring Spalding Gray (820289)
9.35 *Did You See...?* Jeremy Paxman and guests review the week's television programmes (s) (504462)



Inventor of the first sign language: David Calder (10.10pm)

- 10.10 *Film: The Count of Solferino* (1982)
● CHOICE: An absorbing costume drama by David Nokes (one half of the *Crucible* team) is based on the true story of a young deaf-mute abandoned by his aristocratic family on the eve of the French Revolution. The film is based on the play and is brought to life by a superbly cast of actors, including a superb performance by the world's first sign language. *The Count of Solferino* has two interlocking worlds. One is the Abbé's attempt to convince an ignorant society that being deaf is not the same as being a freak or an imbecile. The other is the legal battle to establish the boy's identity and rights of inheritance against a family determined to deny them. In pursuing two strong stories at once Nokes tends sometimes to clutter them but he is splendidly aided by sympathetic performances from the ever-reliable Calder and a promising young deaf actor, Tynon Woolfe. The photography seems unnecessarily sombre. (Ceefax) (s) (5808314)
11.30 *Film: Tokyo Pop* (1988). Midding drama about a New York singer who finds stardom and romance in Tokyo. Starring Celine Dion and Yutaka Tadokoro. Directed by Ruben Kuzi (s) (192227)
1.05am *Rapido* (j) (4240049). Ends at 1.40

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ITV

- 5.00 *TV-am* (9847937)
9.25 *Daisy Club* with Andrea Boardman and Paul Hendy (7700173)
10.45 *Link*: Sian Vasey investigates the media image of disabled people. With signing and subtitles. (Oracle) (1973531)
11.00 *Morning Worship* from St James Church in Carlisle (80802)
12.00 *Encounter*: Sands of Change. Sandy Gell examines how the Gulf War changed the lives of the inhabitants of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (12340)
12.30 *LWT News Weekend* (3654840) 12.55 *LWT Weather* (90440550)
1.00 *News* with Sue Carpenter. Weather (8272737)
1.10 *Walden*: Brian Walden's first quest in the series is Northern Ireland secretary Peter Brooke (s) (1337591) 1.55 *The Day* (47139192)
2.00 *Sharp's Sunday*: Pat Sharp introduces family entertainment, including *Belt and WCNW Pro Wrestling* (848173)
2.50 *Dinosaur*: When Food Goes Bad. Puppet series (s) (2650395)
3.20 *The Match*: Aston Villa v Everton. Elton Wiley introduces live coverage from Villa Park (s) (9195966)
3.50 *Buena Vista*: Jim Bowen hosts the darts quiz (s) (92)
6.00 *Animal Country*: Desmond Morris and Sarah Kennedy meet a sheepdog that prefers goats (s) (55)
6.30 *News* with Sue Carpenter. Weather (260337) 6.35 *LWT News* and weather (262208)
6.40 *Highway*: Sir Harry Secombe visits the Yorkshire Dales. (Oracle) (108821)
7.15 *You've Been Framed*: Jeremy Beadle introduces another selection of home videos (J25531)



The perfect couple David Jason and Pam Ferris (7.45pm)

- 7.45 *The Darling Buds of May*: Oh! To Be in England. Second of a two-part story based on the novels by H. E. Bates. Starring David Jason, Pam Ferris and Catherine Zeta-Jones. (Oracle) (s) (539666)
8.45 *News* with Sue Carpenter. Weather (228915) 9.00 *LWT Weather* (220043)
9.05 *The Evening of Joanna May*: Concluding the two-part adaptation of Joanna May's novel, Joanna comes face to face with her three clones. Starring Patricia Hodge and Brian Cox. (Oracle) (s) (6237043)
10.35 *The South Bank Show*: Les Murray
● CHOICE: A portrait of Australia's leading poet takes a biographical route. Les Murray was born in a small rural township 160 miles north of Sydney to a family of dairy farmers and timber cutters who arrived from Scotland in the 1840s. He left the countryside for Sydney University, discovered a talent for verse, slept rough on Bondi golf course, married and produced a large family and eventually returned to the farm. His poems record this journey at every stage, giving Don Featherstone's film a perfect format in which footage of places and people is evocatively matched to Murray's verse. Murray is a big, red-poly man, a former member of the literary scholarly type that has become the popular image of the poet. His verse poems often come to him like a tune and he tries to write them in his head first before settling to the typewriter and committing the words to paper with a single finger (575733)
11.35 *Hooked*: In the second of six programmes about drugs in the 1980s, Stuart Cosgrove examines addiction (823595)
12.05am *The Evening of Joanna May*: Level 42 in court at Wembley (s) (9778883)
1.00 *The ITV Chart Show* (j) (s) (26002)
2.00 *Film: Revenge* (1971). Rapid drama about a couple who decide to punish the reclusive woman they believe has murdered their daughter. Starring Joan Collins and James Booth. Directed by Sidney Hayers (90512) 3.30 *Pick of the Week* (j) (44512)
4.00 *Film: The Embittered* (1954, b/w). Routine thriller starring Charles Victor as a cashier who decides to steal enough money to live out his remaining years in luxury. Directed by John Gilling (760212)
5.05 *Scoop*: Anarchic comedy (j) (4859570)
5.30 *ITN Morning News* (585823). Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00 *Trans World Sport* (j) (21734) 7.00 *Eureka's Castle* (90289)
7.30 *Star Street* (7409568) 7.55 *The Wild Bunch* (748467) 8.25 *Ramona* (8176280) 8.55 *Little Rascals* (s) (479482)
9.25 *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*: Indian drama serial. In Hindi with English subtitles (1135395)
10.00 *Dispatches*: Current affairs programme (j) (7305753)
10.50 *Dennis*: The mischievous boy and his friends cause more havoc (3314208) 11.10 *Round the Bend* (j) (s) (5880127)
11.30 *Dramarama*: Snap Decision. A talented tennis player is jealous of the attention lavished on his disabled brother. (Oracle) (j) (8173)
12.00 *Little House on the Prairie*: Family Quarrel (j) (49482)
1.00 *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*: Deadly Waters (j) (26802)
2.00 *Film: 49th Parallel* (1941, b/w). Second world war propaganda film about the crew of a German U-boat who are stranded in Canada and try to escape to the United States. Starring Laurence Olivier and Leslie Howard. Directed by Michael Powell (58583173)
4.20 *Trade Tattler*: A 1930s GPO cartoon encouraging people to post early in the day (j) (423802)
4.25 *Valued Opinion*: Max Robertson and Richard Allen of Sothby's look at miniature paintings (1336208)
4.55 *News* and weather (583753)
5.00 *Scottish Eye*: Who Killed Willie McRae? In April 1985, Willie McRae, the Glasgow lawyer and Scottish nationalist, was found in his crashed car. Scottish Eye presents new evidence surrounding the mysterious circumstances of his death (2365)
5.30 *Dig*: Carolyn Marshall presents the offbeat gardening series. This week, Professor Wilkins of Glasgow University talks to plants and gets an answer. (Teletext) (j) (34)
6.00 *Teenage Health Freak*: Drama series charting the growing pains of an adolescent boy (j) (s) (47)
6.30 *The Wonder Years*: Full Moon Rising. Nostalgic American comedy series. Kevin (Fred Savage) goes joy-riding (s) (27)



Caviar kings: Fishing for sturgeon in the Volga delta (7.00pm)

- 7.00 *Fragile Earth: Caviar*
● CHOICE: Channel 4's consistently watchable environmental series returns with a sad tale from the Volga river concerning the most famous delicacy of the former Soviet Union. Caviar is another name for the roe of the sturgeon. Two ounce jars sell for up to £70, though little of this goes back to the poor but fisherman who make the industry possible. The sturgeon is so precious that it is extensively stolen. The poachers are so open about it that they are prepared to appear in this film. A greater threat to the caviar industry than the black market is pollution. Hydro-electric dams on the Volga have not only blocked the sturgeon's migration route but encouraged highly polluting heavy industry along the river banks. There is further pollution from the pesticides used in agriculture. In a desperate attempt to revive stocks, the authorities have introduced artificial fish breeding. It may be too late. (Teletext) (7537)
8.00 *Whickers World* - Down Under. Alan Whickers' 1978 series exploring Australia and its inhabitants (j) (8579)
8.30 *On the Edge* - Improvisation in Music. First of four programmes exploring the importance of improvisation. Douglas Ewart invites children from Chicago's Chinatown to experiment with sounds and instruments (s) (61573)
9.30 *Burning Books*: The first in a new series of the books review programme talks to Jeffrey Archer and reviews Fiona Pitt-Kethley's *The Literary Companion to Sex* (40111)
10.00 *Film: Only Two Can Play* (1982, b/w). Black comedy starring Peter Sellers as a Welsh librarian who endeavours to have an affair with wealthy Miss Zetterling. Directed by Sidney Gilliat. (Teletext) (1259)
12.00 *Film: The Empty Table* (1985). The World Cinema season continues with a Japanese drama about a family whose eldest son is suspected of terrorist activities. Starring Tatsuya Nakadai. Directed by Masaki Kobayashi. With English subtitles (5893419). Ends at 2.40am

ITV VARIATIONS

- ANGLIA**
As London except: 12.30pm *Goals Galore* (0330005) 12.50 *News* (0330444) 2.00 *The Story of Sam* (459173) 2.50 *A Place in the Sun* (263036)
CENTRAL
As London except: 12.30pm-12.55 *Goals Galore* (0330005) 12.55 *News* (0330444) 2.00 *The Story of Sam* (459173) 2.50 *A Place in the Sun* (263036)
GRANADA
As London except: 12.30pm-1.00 *Goals Galore* (0330005) 1.00 *News* (0330444) 2.00 *The Story of Sam* (459173) 2.50 *A Place in the Sun* (263036)
HTV WEST
As London except: 12.30pm-12.55 *Goals Galore* (0330005) 12.55 *News* (0330444) 2.00 *The Story of Sam* (459173) 2.50 *A Place in the Sun* (263036)

RADIO 3

- 6.55am *Weather*
7.00 *Morning Concert*: Bruch (Violin Concerto No 1 in G minor)
7.30 *News*
7.35 *Morning Concert*: Smetana's *Vltava*, The *Symphony* (Concerto, Op 26), Brahms (Hungarian Dances, Vol 2 Nos 11-15), Panufnik (Homage to Chopin)
8.30 *News*
8.35 *Music for the Serenissima*: Fifth of six programmes. Alessandro Scarlatti's last precursors: *Concerto*, *Op 26*, Brahms (Hungarian Dances, Vol 2 Nos 11-15), Panufnik (Homage to Chopin)
9.15 *Judith Quartet*: In the fourth of eight programmes, the quartet plays Barber (Dover Beach, Op 3), with Jonathan Franzen (Dover Beach, Op 3), Wagner (Bagatelles, Op 9), Dvorak (Bagatelles, Op 47), Schoenberg (Pierrot, 1897), Schumann (Pierrot, 1897), Schumann (Pierrot, 1897), Schumann (Pierrot, 1897)
11.00 *From the Proms 1991*: CBCO under Simon Pattle plays *Wagner's Symphonies* (No 3-7)
12.25pm *Live*: George's *Capriccio* piano plays (Hungarian Rhapsodies No 12 in C sharp minor, No 15 in A minor, Rhapsody No 15 in A minor, Rhapsody No 15 in A minor)
12.40 *Symphony*: There is a Cheese in the Affairs of Men. Fifth of six members by Gerald Long. Former managing director of The Times
1.00 *News*
1.05 *Pop*: Concert Choice with Paul Gundry, *Waltz* (The Waltz Waltz), *LPD* under Bryden Thomson, *Kernell* (Lachrymose), *Metamorphoses*, *Ad 40* José Luis García, *John Peter*

- HTV WALES**
As HTV West except: 2.00pm-2.30 *Wales on Sunday*
TSW
As London except: 12.30pm-12.55 *Goals Galore* (0330005) 12.55 *News* (0330444) 2.00 *The Story of Sam* (459173) 2.50 *A Place in the Sun* (263036)
TVS
As London except: 12.30pm-1.00 *Goals Galore* (0330005) 1.00 *News* (0330444) 2.00 *The Story of Sam* (459173) 2.50 *A Place in the Sun* (263036)
TYNE TEES
As London except: 12.30pm-12.55 *Goals Galore* (0330005) 12.55 *News* (0330444) 2.00 *The Story of Sam* (459173) 2.50 *A Place in the Sun* (263036)
ULSTER
As London except: 12.30pm-12.55 *Goals Galore* (0330005) 12.55 *News* (0330444) 2.00 *The Story of Sam* (459173) 2.50 *A Place in the Sun* (263036)

RADIO 4

- (s) Stereo on FM
6.55am *Shirley's Forecast* 6.00 *News* briefing, and 6.03 *Weather* 6.10 *Prelude* (j) 6.30 *News*, Morning has Broken Under the Stars (1989), *News* 7.10 *Sunday Papers* 7.15 *On Your Farm* 7.40 *Sunday*, and 7.55 *Weather* 8.00 *News* 8.10 *Sunday Papers* 8.15 *World's Good Cause* 8.55 *Weather* 9.00 *News* 9.10 *What's It?* 9.15 *Letter from America*: with Alistair Cooke (j) 9.30 *Morning Service*: From the *Worship* Parish Church, Paisley 10.15 *The Archers* 11.15 *News* Stand: with Reggae Nelson (j) 11.30 *Pick of the Week*: with Chris Sells (j) (j) 12.15pm *Sunday Island Desca*: Sue Lawley talks to the writer, J.C. Ballard (j) 12.55 *Weather* 1.00 *The World This Weekend* 1.55 *Shipping Forecast* 2.00 *Gardeners' Question Time*: This week's programme comes from the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital at Stanmore 2.30 *Sunday Playhouse*: *Stone Age* by Carolyn Sally Jones. Val's image of her university days is shattered when she returns there 20 years on 3.45 *The Beaten Track*: Holy Days and Holidays. In the third of four programmes, Ian Aubrey visits European shrines to find the sources of contemporary tourism 4.00 *The Power and the Glory*: In the last of the series, James Naughton looks at America's Cross of Leadership (j) 4.47 *Golden Oldies*: In the second of the series, Les Woodland meets Ray Tunnicliffe, a retired policeman with music centred out of his head 5.00 *News*, *Down Your Way*, *Rabbit* 5.40 *First Person*: Weatherwise from Italy, Dr David Mendel shares from the car (j) 5.50 *Shipping* 5.55 *Weather* 6.00 *News* 6.15 *The Village* (j) 6.30 *Present Words*, *Past Words*: In the second of six programmes, Malcolm

SATellite

- SKY ONE**
Via the Astra and Marquippa satellites. 6.00am *Baywatch* (16314) 6.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 9.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 10.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 11.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 12.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 1.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 2.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 3.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 4.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 5.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 6.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.00 *Baywatch* (16314) 7.30 *Baywatch* (16314) 8.

BBC 1

- 6.35 Open University (721997): Introduction to Economics 6.55 Weekend Outlook 7.00 Pure Maths: Maps
7.25 News and weather (8862642)
7.30 Crystal Tipps and Allstar. Cartoon (r) (1202468) 7.35 Wiz Bang (s) (3181555) 7.45 The Jetsons. Space-age cartoon (r) (2203130) 8.05 Eggs n' Baker. Cheryl Baker's music and cookery series. This week's edition has an Italian theme. (s) (8133555) 8.35 Thundercats. Cartoon adventures (r) (5709710)
9.00 Going Live! Phillip Schofield and Sarah Greene are joined by Noel Edmonds. (s) (3035230) 12.12 Weather (8114517)
12.15 Grandstand. Introduced by Steve Rider. The line-up is (subject to alteration). 12.20, 12.40, 1.40 and 2.15 Rugby Union: live coverage of the international from Twickenham between England and Ireland. Kick-off at 2.30pm. Plus highlights at 4pm of Wales v France at Cardiff. Wales: 2.15 Rugby Union: Wales v France, live; 12.25, 12.55 and 1.25 Racing from Cheltenham. (12.30) Johnsey Estates Handicap Chase; (1.00) Philip Cornes Saddle of Gold Hurdle Final; (1.30) John Hughes Grand National Trial; 12.50 News; 1.10 Cricket highlights of the third day of the second Test between New Zealand and England from Auckland; 1.50 Hockey: commentary from Crystal Palace on the Royal Bank of Scotland National Indoor Club Championship; 4.35 Final Score (8842642)
5.10 News and weather (701284) 5.20 Regional news and sport (3189284). Wales: Wales on Saturday (2502772)
5.25 Stay Tuned! Cartoon favourites (2502772)
5.50 Noel's House Party. Rastellun live with Noel Edmonds, plus Derek and Ellen Jameson, Kathy Staff and the cast of 'Allo 'Allo. Dennis Taylor adds a *Golchse Oscar* to his trophy collection. (s) (481352)
6.40 Big Break. Host Jim Davidson is joined by snooker players Joe Johnson, Ray Reardon and Terry Griffiths. Another round of the green baize game show. (Coelias) (s) (80401)



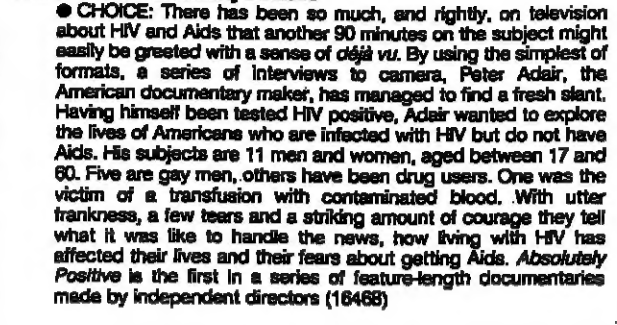
Now you see it, now you don't... Paul Daniels (7.10pm)

- 7.10 The Paul Daniels Magic Show. The chirpy magician is supported by Mike Michaels from Las Vegas and the death-defying Panteleone from Russia. (Coelias) (s) (836294)
7.55 Moon and Son. The Horns of Capricorn. Languid satirical thriller series starring Martin and John Michie as a mother and son detective team. (Coelias) (s) (480449)
8.50 News and sport with Marilyn Lewis. (Coelias) Weather (703420)
9.10 That's Life! Esther Rantzen and Ian McEwan mix pokes with business in the consumer affairs magazine. (Coelias) (s) (848288)
9.50 Midnight Caller. Ain't Too Proud to Beg. Polished American drama series about a late-night radio talk show host. Jack (Gary Cole) asks his pregnant boss to marry him. (s) (894130)
10.40 Film: Flashpoint (1984). Thriller reworking the mystery surrounding the perennial question of who shot John F. Kennedy. Two Texas border patrolmen unearth a buried jeep containing a skeleton, a high-powered rifle and a cache of dollars in 1963 bills. Starring Kris Kristofferson and Treat Williams. Directed by William Taverman. (Coelias) (7439456)
12.10am Film: Blood Beach (1981). Absurd thriller about southern California beach-goers who are terrorized by a subterranean monster. Starring John Saxon and Marlene Hill. Directed by Jeffrey Bloom (8000227) 1.35 Weather (206205)

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BBC 2

- 6.40 Open University (28130): Information Technology - Light Fantastic 7.05 Linkage Mechanisms 7.30 From Snowdon to the Sea 7.55 Exams - A Curious Kind of Ritual 8.20 Constable - The Leaping Horse 8.45 Living with Technology 9.10 Children's Drawings 9.35 Gravity and the Stars 10.00 Panel Painting 10.25 Introduction to Psychology - Two Research Styles 10.50 Modelling - The Wood from the Trees 11.15 Business - Coming Good 11.40 The Changing Experience of Education 12.50 Technology - Facts Are Not Enough 12.55 Insect Diversity 1.20 What Was Modernism? 1.45 Social Science - Regions Apart? 2.35 Managing Schools
3.00 Mahabharat. In Hindi with English subtitles (3711888)
3.40 Film: To Kill a Mockingbird (1962, b/w)
CHOICE: Given traditional white American attitudes towards its black citizens, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was a courageous film for Hollywood to have made in 1962, even if it did set the action back 30 years. At any rate it is a valuable guide to liberal attitudes in the early part of the decade that saw the end of the civil rights movement. In Alabama, heart of the conservative deep south, lawyer Gregory Peck goes against local opposition to defend a black man (Brook Peters) accused of raping a white girl. The long courtroom scene at the heart of the story is, curiously, one of the film's weaker points, its quality less in countering the main plot with a parallel tale of Peck and his two young children which similarly explores the theme of racial prejudice. It is a film, too, of atmosphere, conveyed in Russell Hanft's striking monochrome photography and Robert Mulligan's sympathetic direction (89321352)
5.45 Late Again. Weekly highlights of *The Late Show* (s) (488401)
5.50 News and sport with Chris Lowe. Weather (833420)
6.45 Torteles. Michael Barrymore gives a musical performance. Paul Torteles coaches two young musicians (r) (311449)
7.30 Fine Cut: Absolutely Positive
CHOICE: There has been so much, and rightly, on television about HIV and Aids that another 90 minutes on the subject might seem a little redundant. By using the simplest of formats, a series of interviews to camera, Peter Adair, an American documentary maker, has managed to find a fresh angle. Having himself been tested HIV positive, Adair wanted to explore the lives of Americans who are infected with HIV but do not have Aids. His subjects are 11 men and women, aged between 17 and 60. Five are gay men, others have been drug users. One was the victim of a transfusion with contaminated blood. With utter frankness, a series of interviews and a striking amount of footage, he tells what it was like to handle the news, how living with HIV has affected their lives and their fears about getting Aids. *Absolutely Positive* is the first in a series of feature-length documentaries made by independent directors (18468)



Living with HIV: Marjorie and Delmar Middleton (7.30pm)

- 8.00 Moving Pictures with Howard Schuman. Skip Levey talks about "designing sound" for the films *Cape Fear*, *Mateman* and *Barton Fink*, and there is a profile of the Sobelesberg studios in Berlin which produced such films as *Metropolis*, *Blue Angel* and *Baron Munchausen* (788504)
9.50 Film: *Mateman* (1987). Compelling drama about a West Virginia miners' strike in the 1920s. Chris Cooper stars as a travelling union boss who tries to win the support of the non-union immigrant labour. With Mary McCormack. Directed by John Sayles (5982588)
12.00 Film: *Mateman* (1987). A well-known version of *Goatfied* Berger's novel, ordered by the Nazi regime to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the UFA production company. It is a study affair, of mainly historical interest, though the special effects are still potent. Hans Albers stars as the 18th-century baron, whose outrageous escapades are a forerunner of his vivid imagination. Directed by Josef von Baky. With English subtitles (595856). Ends at 1.55am

ITV

- 6.00 TV-am (9870265)
9.25 Motormouth. Trevor Sorbie, Hardcaster of the Year, gives advice on alternative hairstyles. Oxfam celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, and there are the usual cartoons and chart sounds (7731902)
11.30 The ITV Chart Show. Today's specialist chart is rock, and filling the video slot are The Temptations (s) (31352)
12.30 The Hustlers Today. Herman joins a singing to class (43255)
1.00 ITN News with Sue Carpenter. Weather (5303710) 1.05 LWT News and weather (53036401)
1.10 Saint & Greaville. Ian St John and Jimmy Greaves present the latest action from the Barclays League, and preview tomorrow's match between Aston Villa and Everton. Plus the northwest heat of the Rumbelows Spring Challenge to find football's fastest player (5307979) 1.55 The Day (4716242)
2.00 Ski Tips from Trois Vallées in France (r) (3851)
2.30 Cobblestones, Cottages and Castles. David Young completes the final leg of his journey around southwest Britain (17)
3.00 Film: *The Oregon Trail* (1959). Formula western about a New York reporter who joins a wagon train bound for Oregon. Starring Fred MacMurray. Directed by Gene Fowler Jr (4515877)
4.35 Cartoon Time (388240)
4.45 Results Service. Eton Wesley with a round-up of today's football action (4745488)
5.00 ITN News with Sue Carpenter. Weather (3161888) 5.05 LWT News (7083733)
5.15 Ten Sharp with Pat Sharp (s) (7075623)
5.25 Baywatch. Sun, surf and glamour with the Los Angeles lifeguards. Starring David Hasselhoff and Billy Warlock. (Oracles) (s) (2947517)
6.15 Best of Blind Date. Cilla Black looks back at some of the funniest moments, and the success stories, from earlier series as the programme celebrates its 100th edition (r). (Oracles) (105536)
7.15 Baywatch. Michael Barrymore gives a musical performance of the British public opportunity to entertain (233333)
8.00 The Worst of Alright on the Night. Denis Norden presents a further selection of out-takes, bleeps and blunders. (Oracles) (2913)
9.00 World Championship Boxing: Chris Eubank v Sugar Ray Marlinga. Jim Rossell introduces the WBO super-middleweight championship fight, live from the National Indoor Arena, in Birmingham. The commentators are Reg Gutteridge and Jim Watt (9449)
10.00 ITN News with Sue Carpenter. Weather (805420) 10.15 LWT Weather (765081)
10.20 Aspel & Company. Michael Aspel is joined by the actress Shirley



She can sing, dance, act and write: Shirley Bassey (10.20pm)

- MacLaine who talks about formative years and plugs her new book, *Dance While You Can*. And the Motown supremo, Diana Ross, sings in the studio (312246)
11.05 Year of Dirty: A Necessary Evil. Drama series about American soldiers fighting in the Vietnam war (933420). Followed by *Get Stuffed* (7447859)
12.10am Passengers. The alternative travel guide visits Barcelona, the venue for the 1992 Olympics (595385)
12.40 WGV Pro Wrestling (897734). Followed by *Get Stuffed*
1.45 New Music. Denise Donlan and Jane Lynne White meet the celebrities and show the latest pop videos (650114)
2.45 Bhanga Best. Asian music (23260)
3.15 American College Football. Nebraska v Colorado (905717)
4.15 The Hit Man and Her (1017547)
5.30 ITN Morning News (65355). Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00 Aquaman (8927159) 6.25 Dr Snuggles (5144622) 6.55 Once Upon a Time... Space (870688) 7.25 The Complete Spider (7289153) 7.55 Trans World Sport (1501031) 9.00 News Summary (6156061) 9.15 Channel 4 Racing: The Morning Line (1961517)
9.30 Listening Eye: We Want to be Involved. The integration of deaf people into the community. With signing and subtitles (r) (36791)
10.00 The Big 8: Capital City Jazz v West of Scotland. Martin Duffy introduces last year's wheelchair basketball tournament (r) (85642)
10.30 Film: *Building Jack* (1934, b/w). Vintage comedy thriller in which Jack Hulbert poses as Building Drummond to bring villain Ralph Richardson to justice. With Fay Wray and a stirring climax in the London Underground. Directed by Walter Forde (5763284)
11.50 The Three Stooges: Cuckoo Cavaliers (b/w) (2953449)
12.15 Get Smart. American espionage spoof (425888)
12.45 Channel 4 Racing. Brough Scott introduces the line-up from Sandown Park and Leopardstown. (12.55) Ripley four-year-old Hurdle. (1.25) Scally Isles Novices' Chase. (2.00) Tote Jackpot Hurdle. (2.10) Western Cleeve Chase. (2.30) Agia Diamond Chase (Limited Handicap). (3.10) Agia Hurdle (3721772)
3.30 Film: *A Run for Your Money* (1949, b/w). Lesser Ealing comedy about the misadventures of two Welsh rugby supporters in London. Starring Alec Guinness and Donald Houston. Directed by Charles Frank (351710)
5.05 Broadside. Omnibus edition (r). (Teletext) (s) (498826)
6.30 Right to Reply with Sheena McDonald. (Teletext) (s) (8)
7.00 A Week in Politics. Including News and weather (1807)
8.00 Satellite Sky
CHOICE: A documentary from the British-born film-maker Robert Stone charts the development of the space race from the launching of the Soviet Sputnik to John Glenn's orbit of the Earth five years later. The story is presented without commentary or comment but Stone is not detached observer. His purpose, expressed through clever selection and juxtaposition of material, is to show the dismay in the United States at being upstaged by the Sputnik and the almost paranoid determination to hit back. An unfortunately named Admiral Doolittle thunders: 'A nation that dominates space can dominate the world and we can't let that happen.' A man in the street says: 'It's about time America woke up.' President Kennedy promises an American man on the moon by the end of the 1960s. Stone underlines the element of fantasy and unreality by working in clips from science fiction film (5505)



The making of a great comic actor: Peter Sellers (9.00pm)

- 9.00 Sellers' Best?
CHOICE: This documentary, and accompanying Peter Sellers season, concentrates on the actor's British films, before the *Pink Panther* series took him off to international stardom. The question mark after the title raises the pertinent issue of whether early British Sellers was "better" than later Hollywood Sellers. That can be argued at length. Ironically two of his best films, *Locke* and *Strangers with Canes*, were hybrids, American subjects that happened to be made in British studios. At any rate it is good to be reminded of Sellers' formative years in the cinema, which included the Goonish shorts being screened after this programme, as well as the Boulting comedies and *Only Two Can Play*. The programme was made by Chris Rodley and Paul Joyce, who were responsible for the excellent Dirk Bogarde profile on this channel, and includes contributions from Sellers' friends and collaborators (955284)
10.15 Film: *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film* (1959, b/w). Silent comedy short, filmed in sepia, starring Peter Sellers and fellow Goon Spike Milligan. Directed by Richard Lester (89517)
10.30 Film: *The Case of the Muddishme Battlemoon* (1955). Goon-inspired short in which Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan investigate a museum theft (12343)
11.00 Film: *20,000 Years in Sing Sing* (1932, b/w). The prison movie season continues with a powerful melodrama starring Spencer Tracy as a convict who takes the rap when girlfriend Bette Davis kills a man. Directed by Michael Curtiz (48454)
12.25am The Word (r) (s) (5755173). Ends at 1.25

SATellite

SKY ONE

- 6.00am Eurosport 1 (600000) 6.30am Sky News (600000) 7.00am Sky News (600000) 7.30am Sky News (600000) 8.00am Sky News (600000) 8.30am Sky News (600000) 9.00am Sky News (600000) 9.30am Sky News (600000) 10.00am Sky News (600000) 10.30am Sky News (600000) 11.00am Sky News (600000) 11.30am Sky News (600000) 12.00am Sky News (600000) 12.30am Sky News (600000) 1.00am Sky News (600000) 1.30am Sky News (600000) 2.00am Sky News (600000) 2.30am Sky News (600000) 3.00am Sky News (600000) 3.30am Sky News (600000) 4.00am Sky News (600000) 4.30am Sky News (600000) 5.00am Sky News (600000) 5.30am Sky News (600000) 6.00am Sky News (600000) 6.30am Sky News (600000) 7.00am Sky News (600000) 7.30am Sky News (600000) 8.00am Sky News (600000) 8.30am Sky News (600000) 9.00am Sky News (600000) 9.30am Sky News (600000) 10.00am Sky News (600000) 10.30am Sky News (600000) 11.00am Sky News (600000) 11.30am Sky News (600000) 12.00am Sky News (600000) 12.30am Sky News (600000) 1.00am Sky News (600000) 1.30am 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